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THESIS

ALTERNATIVE STRATEGIES FOR IRAQ

by

Constantin Adrian Ciolponea
Cristian Angel Iancu

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Thesis Advisor:
Second Reader:

Douglas Borer
Hy Rothstein

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ALTERNATIVE STRATEGIES FOR IRAQ

Constantin A. Ciolponea
Lieutenant Colonel, Special Operations
B.S., National Defence University, Bucharest, 2004

Cristian A. Iancu
Major, Special Forces
B.S., Military Institute "Ioan Voda," 1995

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requirements for the degree of

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**NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL
June 2007**

Authors: Constantin Adrian Ciolponea
Cristian Angel Iancu

Approved by: Douglas Borer
Thesis Advisor

Hy S. Rothstein
Second Reader

Gordon H. McCormick
Chairman, Department of Defense Analysis

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ABSTRACT

This thesis explores strategically viable options for dealing with the Iraq conflict with a new perspective on the dynamics of insurgency in Iraq and basic guidelines for an unconventional counterinsurgency effort. In introduction, the thesis presents an overview of the Iraq situation, describing the actors in the conflict, their political objectives, and the consequences of their actions. The thesis explores the theoretical concepts of the Mystic Diamond model developed by Gordon McCormick, which identifies the component variables of insurgencies and the dynamics of conflict between the state and counter-state. The thesis uses the Mystic Diamond model to interpret the Iraqi situation and explores steps for implementing an unconventional strategy in Iraq, including the skill sets that would be needed by unconventional forces tasked to carry out the proposed strategy. The conclusion emphasizes that the coalition forces have used a conventional strategy to stabilize a totally unconventional and increasingly uncontrollable environment. Political and military leaders are advised to consider the benefits of an unconventional approach when dealing with a counterinsurgency environment.

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I. THE SECOND WAR AGAINST IRAQ: FROM TOTAL SUCCESS TO POTENTIAL FAILURE

A. INTRODUCTION

The 2003 war against Iraq has become one of the new century's most powerful controversies. The so-called "second Gulf War" split the world into opposing sides.¹ The split of world opinion treats human controversy in terms of categorical oppositions like "us versus them."² The war against Iraq has been advocated, prepared for, developed, and sustained within a tsunami of pros and cons, a storm of ideas that affects strategic implementation and the articulation of the war's strategic objective. The debate shapes the future of Iraq; disagreements are evident there today in the Iraqis' lack of political consensus and national reconciliation. Iraq is becoming an anarchic environment, a situation with enormous negative consequences, in humanitarian terms, for the Middle East and perhaps beyond.

From the beginning, the Iraq war was considered a problem with global significance, but its significance has been interpreted differently, and in many cases inconsistently or superficially, by the world's political and military leaders. International controversy and increasing evidence of political and military breakdown threaten the legitimacy of the war, and a positive end in the near future seems unlikely.

B. PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF THE THESIS

The intention of this thesis is not to criticize past and present political and military decisions, but to explore other strategically viable options for the Iraq conflict. There is a window of opportunity for any proposed solution, a time frame in which it would likely be most effective. A solution should also allow the theoretical concepts be confirmed or

¹ "The U.S. Road to War," (New York: Monitoring Policy Making at the United Nations, Global Forum Policy), available from <http://www.globalpolicy.org/security/issues/iraq/roadindex.htm>, accessed 2 April 2007.

² Samuel Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2003).

verified in their confrontation with the harsh reality. Because the Iraq conflict involves a myriad of variables, a theoretical concept cannot be verified unless it is actually implemented. Although the correctness of a particular concept or strategic approach can be proven in theory, it is more important that the concept be efficiently implemented on the ground.

The goal of this thesis is to examine a select portion of the ideas and variables involved in the Iraq war. The thesis begins, first, by describing the current Iraq situation, including a brief overview of the actors in the conflict, their political objectives, and the consequences of their actions. Second, the thesis explores, at the theoretical level, the concepts presented in the “Mystic Diamond” model developed by Gordon McCormick. Third, the thesis identifies relevant variables in contemporary Iraq and explains them through the lens of the Mystic Diamond model. Finally, the thesis describes appropriate steps for implementing an unconventional strategy in Iraq, including the package of forces necessary to carry out the relevant tasks.

The conclusions emphasize the fact that so far, the coalition forces have used a conventional strategy to stabilize a totally unconventional environment which every day becomes harder to control. The thesis suggests that it is best to consider the benefits of an unconventional approach when dealing with a counterinsurgency environment. Assessment of the Iraq situation as a case study is based on the internationally recognized and accepted aims to stabilize, secure, reorganize and reconstruct Iraq as a successful example of democratization in the Middle East.

When describing the current situation in Iraq, several questions appear critical. Who are the actors involved and what are their political objectives? What has been done right and what has been done wrong? What are the main obstacles to stabilizing Iraq? What is the most feasible design, operationally and strategically, for an unconventional strategy in Iraq? What are the main issues and obstacles to an unconventional strategy in this case? These and other relevant questions are considered to support the conclusions of the thesis.

It is important to note that some analysts believe the situation in Iraq should be characterized as an internal ethnic or sectarian insurgency or even a civil war which cannot be contained or solved in the light of the current strategy. For example, Ahmed Hashim writes,

The situation in Iraq might be called a low intensity, localized and decentralized insurgency, with a large number of decentralized insurgent groups engaging in violence to disrupt and remove the U.S./Coalition Forces presence.³

The authors of this thesis acknowledge the complexity, instability and insecurity of the situation in Iraq, and have selected the elements and issues most amenable to analysis with the chosen model.

C. EXTERNAL AND INTERNAL CONDITIONS PRECEDING THE WAR

Analyzing the background of the “second Gulf War” implicitly recognizes that today’s problems are rooted in the past. The current complex environment developed gradually as a result of the first Gulf War, which was followed by the Saddam regime’s massive retaliation against newly emerging resistance forces in Kurdish and Shia areas.⁴

Lacking time and space to review all the causes of the second Iraq war, this thesis begins by analyzing the Iraqi situation strategically and in terms of its implementation phases, starting with the first successful military campaign in 2003. The initial military campaign was followed by a dangerous situation which resulted in a series of miscalculations, inappropriate reactions and lack of coordination between political and military leaders. The chronologic events can be characterized starting with a vacuum of political power which fueled the resistance movement. The unstable environment allowed a later transition from resistance movement into insurgency. This insurgency degenerated into an acute sectarian clash and power struggle between different groups within Iraq. In

³ Ahmed Hashim, *Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in Iraq* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006), 12.

⁴ “The U.S. Road to War,” (New York: Monitoring Policy making at the United Nations, Global Forum Policy), available from <http://www.globalpolicy.org/security/issues/iraq/roadindex.htm>, accessed 2 April 2007.

brief, the vacuum of power created by the coalition forces' campaign precipitated an unpredictable reaction from traditional and emerging internal political forces.

The military campaign was planned and conducted in accordance with the revolutionary concept of Effects Based Operations (EBO), a concept originating with the Secretary of State Colin Powell and Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld.⁵ The campaign began on March 20, 2003, and concluded successfully on April 9, 2003, when the U.S. forces entered Baghdad. The country was rapidly conquered, Saddam's autocratic regime dissolved, and the Iraqi people were freed from the oppression of a dictatorial and odious leader.

At the time, many hoped that Iraq's future would be based on freedom and democratic values. For part of the world, the victory was seen as significant because it ended Iraq's aggressive expansionist posture, eliminated an unpredictable military power, and destroyed a regime allegedly linked to international terrorism.

Not many doubt the overwhelming and successful U.S. military campaign. Innovative thinking and brilliant operational management are the main characteristics of the military success. It is now clear, however, that the military believed that once the campaign was finished, the Department of State (DOS) would step in to conduct reconstruction and the army would play only a limited role. The reality was totally different. Today, the U.S. military commander in Iraq, General David Petraeus, is perhaps the most important man in the country, as his decisions directly affect all aspects of the Iraqi environment.

Many unexpected problems have emerged after the initial victory with the fall of Baghdad, when the overall strategy had to be recalibrated and new policies adopted in order to complete the general implementation plan. There were many obvious needs: to reinforce and maintain the stability and security of the country and to further rebuild and

⁵ David Pendall, *Effects Based Operations and the Exercise of the National Power*, *Military Review*, (National Security Agency, Fort Meade, MD, January - February 2004), available from <http://www.iwar.org.uk/rma/resources/ebo/national-power.pdf>, accessed 1 April 2007.

democratize Iraq. It was expected that policies would be implemented by intelligent professionals bringing with them a variety of economic and financial resources, all with ongoing military support.

The job should have been completed through the cooperative involvement of two U.S. departments, with the DOS taking the primary role after the fall of Baghdad while the Department of Defense (DOD) assured a safe environment.⁶ The lead in implementing the strategic plan should have been rapidly transferred from the military hands of the DOD to the civilian hands of DOS, whose representatives have the proficiencies and assets to assume the leadership and administration of the country until it could be turned over to the Iraqi people. The military would remain involved after the war, but merely in a supporting role.

In reality, the facts reveal that either the transition from military to civilian involvement was not really planned as should have been, or the implementation did not work smoothly and in accordance with the political and military strategic objectives. There was a short window of opportunity within which Iraq should have been managed with much more competence in order to achieve the desired ends: to help the country revive from the disintegration of the state, to sterilize Iraqi' internal and external environments, and to prepare the nation for a careful transition to democracy. This strong, competent management and administration did not take place. Consequently, a series of postwar mistakes – incorrect assumptions, misperceptions, indecision, inappropriate reactions and overreactions – coupled with internal and external problems, transformed the Iraqi situation into one some now characterize as chaotic.⁷

⁶ For a deep analysis and evaluation of the laborious work involved with specific operations and activities in nation building process, see James Dobbins et al., *America's Role in Nation-Building: From Germany to Iraq* (Santa Monica: RAND Corporation, September 1, 2003) and also James Dobbins et al., *The UN's Role in Nation-Building: From the Congo to Iraq* (Santa Monica: RAND Corporation, 2006).

⁷ See the research and analysis as of the end of 2006 by the Iraq Study Group, which was co-chaired by James A. Baker, III, and Lee H. Hamilton and included a number of former highly-placed public officials. James A. Baker et al., *The Iraq Study Group Report* (New York: Vintage, 2006).

By not stepping in quickly and wisely to manage Iraq after the war, DOS and DOD representatives on the ground faced a Huntingtonian clash of civilizations. The situation was perceived as an acute power vacuum, which led many Iraqi people to seek profit from the chaos by looting and destroying the remaining Iraqi economy and very fragile infrastructure. Other causes of discontent include the Iraqi people's unmet expectations, the ruling power's failure to meet the population's basic needs, some cases of coalition forces reacting inappropriately to the growing resistance movement, a dangerous development towards Iraqi economic collapse, radical and controversial policies like deBa'athification and disbanding the Iraqi army. Iraqi perception of the coalition forces gradually degraded, and the positive attitude toward their liberators and initial joy of freedom was replaced by growing discontent and disappointment. As Keith Mines notes,

DeBa'athification and the disbanding of the Iraqi army sent a clear signal to the Sunnis that they did not have a place in the new Iraq. The reality for Iraqis was that the fall of the regime produced winners (Kurds and Shiites) and losers (Sunnis), which fueled Sunni opposition to the Coalition. The key issue in Iraq remains how to empower the previously disenfranchised Shiites and Kurds, in a way does not disempower the Sunni. Until this is settled no amount of security forces or economic programs will bring success.⁸

The situation fed a new reactionary movement and the Iraqi resistance shifted gradually towards a generalized insurgency against the new local political-military leadership and their coalition sponsors.

D. THE CURRENT SITUATION IN IRAQ

Even though there are some signs of social, political and economic reforms, the situation, especially in the region known as the Sunni Triangle, reveals that Iraq is still far from achieving the actual political and military strategic objective of the war: a unified Iraq, capable of governing and defending itself, perhaps even economically self-

⁸ Keith W. Mines, "Economic Tools in Counterinsurgency and Post Conflict Stabilization: Lessons Learned in Al Anbar, Iraq, 2003-2004," *Council for Emerging Security Affairs*, September 2006, 4.

sustaining.⁹ The situation is characterized by a high level of violence, as shown in Figure 1. The violence provokes instability, which impedes national development. The vicious circle is difficult to penetrate, especially with the conventional means used in waging regular wars.

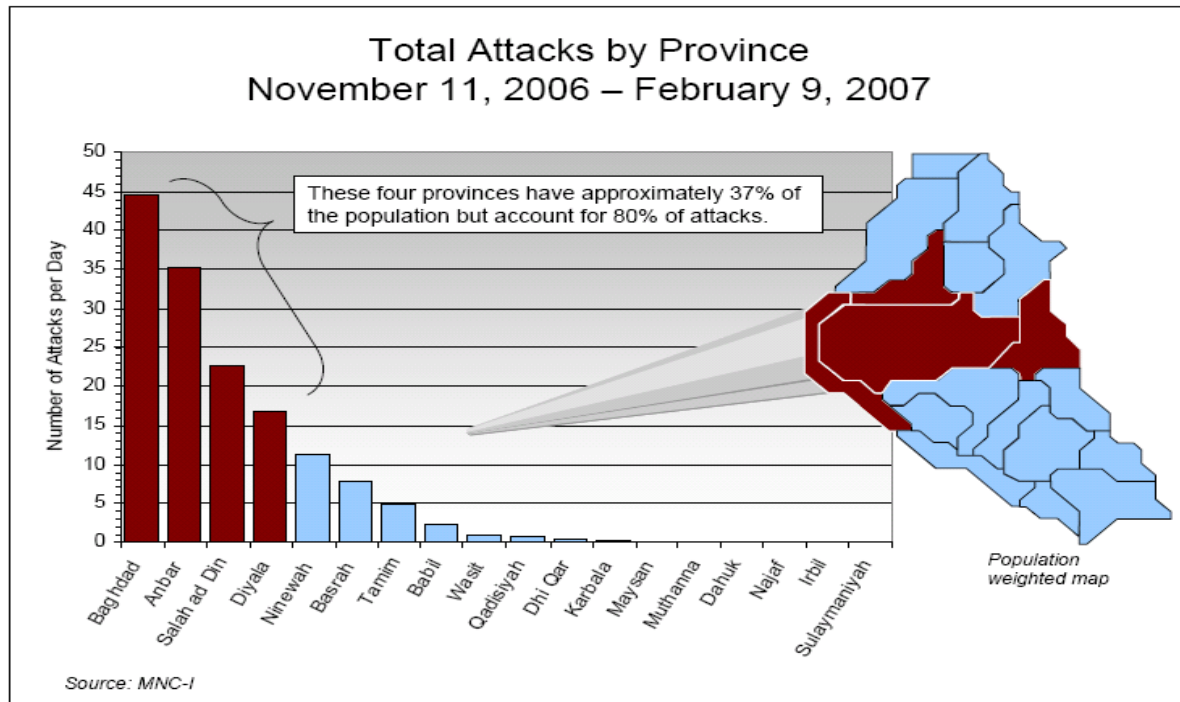


Figure 1. Total Attacks by Province.

Source: *Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq*, (Washington, D.C.: Department of Defense Report to Congress, March 2007), 15.

As noted in the recent report to the U.S. Congress, “Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq,

The strategic goal of the United States for Iraq remains a unified, democratic, federal Iraq that can govern itself, defend itself, and sustain itself, and that is an ally in the war on terror.

⁹ “Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq,” (Washington, D.C.: Department of Defense Report to Congress in accordance with Department of Defense Appropriations Act 2007–Section 9010, Public Law 109- 289, March 2007), 1.

One year ago, as described in the February 2006 edition of this series of reports, the Iraqi people were on their way to achieving these goals.

Unfortunately, these positive events were followed by a series of attacks that initiated a cycle of sectarian violence, undermined political gains, and challenged the Government of Iraq (GOI).¹⁰

It would not be fair to discount the progress achieved in the last four years. There are positive efforts at political reforms: building the framework for democratic institutions, national reconciliation projects, and solving transnational issues like Iranian and Syrian influences on the internal insurgency, cooling tensions at the Turkish border, and reducing massive refugee problems focused on Syria and Jordan. Although there is room for improvement in fighting criminal activities, public corruption, police security, and the treatment of prisoners and detainees, there is sensible progress in achieving and implementing the rule of law.¹¹

In regards to economic conditions, the coalition has assisted various projects. The most pressing issue is the legal status of national oil revenue, which is crucial for building political consensus. Other relevant issues include the discrepancies between different regions' infrastructure development and employment rates, industries that cannot sustain themselves (so-called economic “black holes”) and the uneven distribution of investments that is dependent on the level of security. Although the oil and energy industries do not yet function at the same levels as before the war, there are consistent efforts to improve the situation. Concerns like water purification, sanitation, nutrition, poverty, and agriculture are all on the table for the Iraqi government and its coalition forces advisors.¹²

Security and stability remain the primary focus for both the Iraqi political and military leaders and the coalition forces. The internal situation can be characterized as a multi-insurgent struggle between insurgents and government and coalition forces, and

¹⁰ “Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq,” 1.

¹¹ “Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq,” 3-13.

¹² “Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq,” 3-13.

also as a struggle between different insurgent factions for power and influence over Iraqi society and politics. Quoting again from “Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq,”

The conflict in Iraq has changed from a predominantly Sunni-led insurgency against foreign occupation to a struggle for the division of political and economic influence among sectarian groups and organized criminal activity. As described in the January 2007 National Intelligence Estimate, the term “civil war” does not adequately capture the complexity of the conflict in Iraq, which includes extensive Shi’a-on-Shi’a violence, al-Qaida and Sunni insurgent attacks on Coalition forces, and widespread criminally motivated violence.¹³

Group	Goals
Sunni Insurgents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expel U.S. and Coalition forces from Iraq • Topple the “unity” government • Re-establish Sunni governance in Anbar and Diyala
AQI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Force Coalition forces withdrawal • Gain territory to export conflict • Provoke clash between Islam and others • Establish caliphate with <i>Shari’a</i> governance
JAM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Force Coalition forces withdrawal • Consolidate control over Baghdad and the GOI • Exert control over security institutions • Implement <i>Shari’a</i> governance

Table 1. Goals of Key Insurgent Groups in Iraq.

Source: *Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq*, (Washington D.C.: Department of Defense Report to Congress, March 2007), 16.

As shown in Table 1, the report specifies mainly three sets of insurgents: Sunni insurgents; Al Qaeda in Iraq (AQI), an “other Sunni insurgent faction;” and Jaysh al Mahdi (JAM), a Shia insurgent faction. The fight for Iraqi hearts and minds and the efforts of the Iraqi government and its coalition advisors to meet public expectations and to control, administer and lead are jeopardized by those insurgent groups. The leadership tries hard to cool the violence with daily military actions directed at the insurgents’ core.

¹³ “Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq,” 14.

Nevertheless, there are many issues that must be addressed first, and the possibility of changing strategy deserves a thorough analysis. In his first news conference after taking command, General Petraeus said,

Military action is necessary to help improve security...but it is not sufficient. A political resolution of various differences... of various senses that people do not have a stake in the successes of Iraq and so forth — that is crucial. That is what will determine, in the long run, the success of this effort.¹⁴

E. THE NEED TO SHIFT STRATEGY

1. Lykke's Model of War Strategy: Goals, Concepts, Resources

When analyzing the war strategy in Iraq, important concepts are proposed by Arthur F. Lykke in his model of a three-legged “strategy stool.”



Figure 2. A Model for Military Strategy.

Source: Arthur F. Lykke, “Toward an Understanding of Military Strategy,” in *Guide to Strategy* (U.S. Army War College, February 2001) 182.

¹⁴ David Petraeus, speaking at a news conference, “No military solution to Iraq, U.S. general says” CNN, 9 March 2007, available from <http://www.cnn.com/2007/WORLD/meast/03/08/iraq.petraeus/index.html>, accessed 10 March 2007.

The model implies that any strategy needs a correct and healthy foundation based on three “legs”: objectives (ends), concepts (ways to achieve the goals, or courses of action), and resources (means). Then, Arthur F. Lykke defines suggestively those legs in the following Table 2.

Strategy = Ends + Ways + Means.	
Component	Definition
Ends	Objectives towards which one strives
Ways	Course of action
Means	Instruments by which some end can be achieved

Table 2. Components of Strategy: Definitions.

Source: Arthur F. Lykke, “Toward an Understanding of Military Strategy,” in *Guide to Strategy* (U.S. Army War College, February 2001) 179.

When one or more of the legs is not in touch with the reality on the ground, then the strategy becomes less efficient. With this in mind, the current conventional war strategy in Iraq has unbalanced objectives, concepts and resources. Objectively, when facing an unpredictable situation on the ground, a strategic shift should involve specific recalibrations of the initial strategy through flexible changes designed to facilitate an appropriate reaction. In this light it is important to see how the National War Strategy in Iraq has been adjusted so far.

2. Relevant Shortcomings of the National War Strategy, 2007

Given the conclusions and recommendations of the Iraqi Study Group, and relevant considerations raised by think tank analysts like Frederick Kagan it seems clear that current strategy does not involve serious modification of the conventional military approach. It is aimed at an accelerated handover to the (presumably operational) Iraqi Security Forces (ISF).

It should be possible to increase the available combat power in Iraq by about 7 brigades in the following manner. U.S. forces are in the middle of another rotation. In the past, CENTCOM has delayed the departure of units to achieve temporary increases in deployed combat forces as new forces arrive. This technique could be used again to generate an additional 6 brigades or so (about 21,000 soldiers--similar to the increase maintained through the election cycle). Committing the rest of the reserve brigade now stationed in Kuwait (and leaving the battalion already called forward into Iraq in country) generates an additional brigade. These 7 brigades (about 24,500 combat troops and a similar number of support troops) would join the 15 brigades already in Iraq, many of which are deployed in or near areas designated for active operations in the plan outlined below. What, then, could the coalition do with such a force--a total of 77,000 American combat troops--to defeat the insurgency?¹⁵

One shortcoming of the strategy is the lack of authoritative control over the general population, the ethnic armed groups; in other words, the failure to clear and hold the area. The Pentagon declared that after 2004, most operations were “sweep up” operations directed to capture or kill insurgent or terrorist leaders. However, when the troops left the area of operation, various armed groups moved in quickly. Thus, the results of military operations were mostly temporary. The second challenge when the sweep up concept is applied is that the enemy has indefinite shape. The trend of the 2007 strategy is to transition the U.S. military role from a combat posture to a supporting role for the ISF. Thus, the primary mission of the Army will shift to

Support Iraqis provide greater levels of security in Baghdad in order to enable political and economic progress; Support Iraqis create the security environment in which political deals needed to sustain security gains can be made; Bolster Iraqi capabilities and transfer responsibility to able units as part of this effort.¹⁶

With this strategy, the U.S. administration announced to the Iraqi government that the Iraqis are responsible for success or failure, that the sectarian issue should be addressed by Iraqi's themselves, and that impartiality, with the goal of political consensus, should govern all government actions.

¹⁵ Frederick Kagan, “*A Plan for Victory in Iraq*,” (The weekly Standard, 22 May 2006), 16.

¹⁶ *National Strategy for War in Iraq*, National Security Council, 2007.

One current strategic objective, the handover of responsibility to the ISF, seems ambitious when compared with means (resources) and ways (concepts). Even though the concept of restructuring and rebuilding the ISF simultaneously with the handover of the operational command seems reasonable, if the ISF is not adequately prepared for the task, the results could be negative. The shortcoming of the new strategy is that it tries to accomplish two conflicting goals at once.

This may be too big a task for the ISF, which has many problems with leadership, logistics, funding, loyalty, and ethnic cleansing. The ISF simply cannot conduct efficient combat operations when restructuring.

The Iraqi Army is also confronted by several other significant challenges:

Units lack leadership. They lack the ability to work together and perform at higher levels of organization—the brigade and division level. Leadership training and the experience of leadership are the essential elements to improve performance.

Units lack equipment. They cannot carry out their missions without adequate equipment. The entire appropriation for Iraqi defense forces for FY 2006 (\$3 billion) is less than the United States currently spends in Iraq every two weeks.

Units lack personnel. Soldiers are on leave one week a month so that they can visit their families and take their pay. Unit readiness rates are low, often at 50 percent or less.

Units lack logistics and support. They lack the ability to sustain their operations, the capability to transport supplies and troops, and the capacity to provide their own indirect fire support, close-air support, technical intelligence, and medical evacuation. They will depend on the United States for logistics and support through at least 2007.¹⁷

¹⁷ See the research and analysis as of the end of 2006 by the Iraq Study Group, which was co-chaired by James A. Baker, III, and Lee H. Hamilton and included a number of former highly-placed public officials. James A. Baker et al., *The Iraq Study Group Report* (New York: Vintage, 2006).

The new military approach involves a “surge” of U.S. troops which is perceived as too great a stretch for the Army. According to the press, some commanders on the ground argue that the 21,000 member surge, rather than immediately improving security and stability, will offer more potential targets to insurgents.

The military's caution on shipping thousands of additional troops temporarily to Iraq is based on a fear that the move could be ineffective without bold new political and economic steps. Commanders also worry that the already stretched Army and Marine Corps would be even thinner once the short-term surge ended. Bush's newly expressed interest in making the military larger would have little impact on that worry because it will take much longer to add substantially to the size of the military.¹⁸

Overall, the 2007 war strategy involves a disproportion in the balance between ways (concepts) and means (resources – mainly conventional) of strategical implementation in order to achieve the required ends (objectives) of stabilizing and securing the complex and unconventional Iraqi war environment, and further on, democratize and reconstruct the country.

3. Arreguin-Toft Asymmetric Theory of Conflict

Based on carefully evaluated historical evidence, Ivan Arreguin-Toft developed a solid theory demonstrating that the symmetry or asymmetry of belligerent forces' strategies is an essential determinant of the final outcome of the war. In his theory, especially relevant to low intensity conflict, there is special attention to the question, “How do the weak win wars?”

Understanding the conditions under which weak actors win wars is important for two reasons. First, if there are dynamics unique to asymmetric conflicts, or if their analysis provides fresh insights into symmetrical conflicts, a general explanation of asymmetric conflict outcomes is not only desirable but necessary, both to reduce the likelihood of unwinnable wars and to increase the chances of U.S. success when a resort to arms is necessary. Second, because asymmetric conflicts ranging from catastrophic terrorism to military intervention in interstate, ethnic, and civil wars are the most likely threat to U.S. security and interests, only

¹⁸ Robert Burns, “Iraq troop buildup idea worries generals,” (The Washington Post, 19 December 2006), 1.

a general theory of symmetric conflict outcomes can guide U.S. policymakers in their efforts to build the kinds of armed and other forces necessary to implement an effective U.S. strategic response.¹⁹

The weak, including insurgency movements, win low intensity conflicts by using an asymmetric strategic approach. If the insurgents fight unconventionally against the state entrenched in conventional vision, the chances to win will seldom favor the weak actor.²⁰ If the insurgents use an unconventional (indirect) strategy against a conventional (direct) state strategy, then the insurgents are more likely to win.

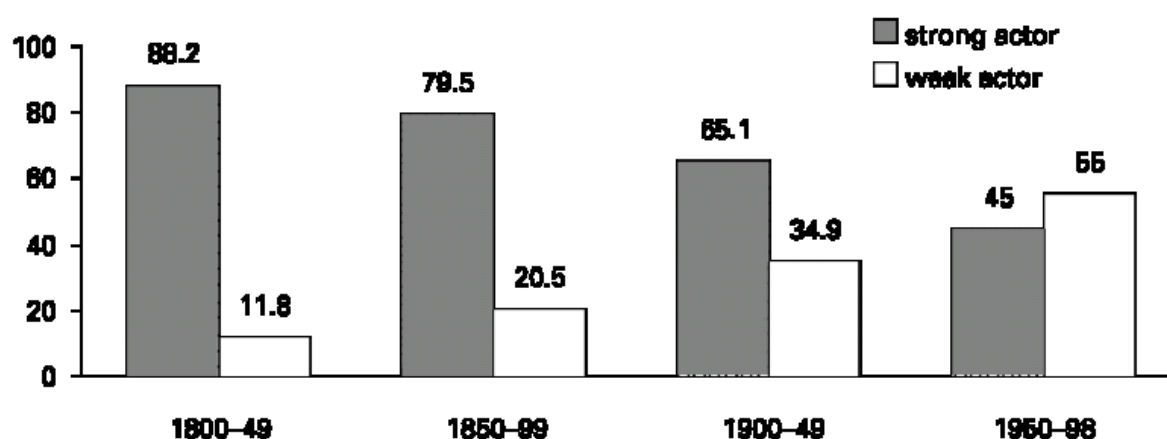


Figure 3. Percentage of Asymmetric Conflict Victories by Type of Actor in Forty Year Periods.

Source: Ivan Arreguin-Toft, *How the Weak Win Wars: A Theory of Asymmetric Conflict* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press), 97.

The implication is that coalition force efforts in Iraq are less efficient when a conventional response is applied to an unconventional threat, and the evidence seems to bear this out. To recalibrate the situation, one should change the strategy to correspond to that used by enemy, which in this case is an unconventional approach.

¹⁹ Ivan Arreguin-Toft, *How the Weak Win Wars: A Theory of Asymmetric Conflict* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press), 94.

²⁰ Arreguin-Toft, 94 -128.

4. Conclusions of the Iraq Study Group

In November 2006, the Iraq Study Group endorsed a more complex diplomatic, economic and military package to deal with the Iraq war situation. Their emphasis on the need for a different strategic approach emerges from the group's 72 specific recommendations.

Referring to the military engagement, the report says that the U.S. army should transition from its “clear, hold and reconstruct” mission. To play a supporting role for Iraqi forces, U.S. small units and advisors would be embedded in Iraqi battalions to provide expertise against sectarian violence and the terrorist attacks. Interestingly, the study explores four possible solutions regarding the complex situation in Iraq: a diplomatic solution, staying the course, increasing the level of force, or an exit solution. Retreat is not an option.

Because of the importance of Iraq, the potential for catastrophe, and the role and commitments of the United States in initiating events that have led to the current situation, we believe it would be wrong for the United States to abandon the country through a precipitate withdrawal of troops and support. A premature American departure from Iraq would almost certainly produce greater sectarian violence and further deterioration of conditions, leading to a number of the adverse consequences outlined above. The near-term results would be a significant power vacuum, greater human suffering, and regional destabilization.²¹

The surge of U.S. forces is not recommended by the group:

Sustained increases in U.S. troop levels would not solve the fundamental cause of violence in Iraq, which is the absence of national reconciliation. A senior American general told us that adding U.S. troops might temporarily help limit violence in a highly localized area. However, past experience indicates that the violence would simply rekindle as soon as U.S. forces are moved to another area. As another American general told us, if the Iraqi government does not make political progress, “no troops in the world will provide security.”²²

²¹ Baker et al., 37.

²² Baker et al., 33.

Finally, the study criticizes the current strategy as ineffective. In social and political terms, the federalization solution and the constitution of three semiautonomous regions is perceived as a weak solution due to the intermingled distribution of minorities in all 18 provinces of Iraq and because the process will further destabilize Iraq, especially in regard to revenue.

The report calls for a change in the military approach in order to reduce the U.S. presence in Iraq.

In this report, we make a number of recommendations for actions to be taken in Iraq, the United States, and the region. Our most important recommendations call for new and enhanced diplomatic and political efforts in Iraq and the region, and a change in the primary mission of U.S. forces in Iraq that will enable the United States to begin to move its combat forces out of Iraq responsibly. We believe that these two recommendations are equally important and reinforce one another. If they are effectively implemented, and if the Iraqi government moves forward with national reconciliation, Iraqis will have an opportunity for a better future, terrorism will be dealt a blow, stability will be enhanced in an important part of the world, and America's credibility, interests, and values will be protected.²³

In concluding, the Iraq Study Group acknowledges the necessity for a new military strategy in Iraq, recommending that military strategy be embedded in a more complex package of aggressive diplomacy and economic reform.

F. SUMMARY

This chapter establishes that the complexity of the Iraq situation requires a complex solution. The U.S. administration and its military leadership developed a strategically innovative approach for the initial conventional war but failed to anticipate or recognize the unconventional results and to adjust accordingly.

Many aspects of the situation in Iraq were misperceived or unnoticed from the beginning; these proved to be determining factors for subsequent developments in the Iraq conflict, serving as premises, and therefore causes, of the chaotic situation that

²³ Baker et al., 34.

emerged on the ground after the fall of Baghdad. This terrible conjunction of forces instigated the transition from the initial success of the military invasion to a potential failure with horrible consequences for the security and stability of Iraq, the Middle East, and possibly the entire world. As the Iraq Study Group writes,

If the situation continues to deteriorate, the consequences could be severe. A slide toward chaos could trigger the collapse of Iraq's government and a humanitarian catastrophe. Neighboring countries could intervene. Sunni-Shia clashes could spread. Al Qaeda could win a propaganda victory and expand its base of operations. The global standing of the United States could be diminished.²⁴

The need to explore a different strategic approach using existing models is obvious. Accordingly, the next chapter explores the theoretical and practical aspects of Professor Gordon McCormick's Mystic Diamond strategic model as a possible source of solutions to the Iraqi conflict.

²⁴ Baker et al., xiv.

II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: THE MYSTIC DIAMOND MODEL

A. THE IMPORTANCE OF MODELS

Models are organizing devices to help political and military leaders identify critical issues. Intellectual models simplify reality. To be validated, a model must be tested in realistic conditions and must have predictive as well as explanatory power. Assuming that the model is accurate, other measures of its value are simplicity, practicality, and power. Simplicity is critical for presenting the model to others. To be practical, the model should be fully understood at the individual, organizational and strategic level, while a powerful model is useful for prediction.

B. MAJOR CHARACTERISTICS OF THE MYSTIC DIAMOND MODEL

McCormick's Mystic Diamond model illustrates the conditions, dynamics, and complexity of an insurgency and prescribes the appropriate steps for successful counterinsurgency strategy.²⁵ The model involves two levels of analysis. At the strategic level, it emphasizes the necessity of winning popular support in order to achieve the desired political objective. "Like the moving bubble on a level, the behavior of the bulk of the populace will shift to assist either the government or the insurgents, depending on the carrots and sticks (rewards and punishments) used by each side."²⁶ At the operational and tactical level, the model proposes a complex package of interdependent social, political, judicial, economical, and military solutions to isolate and neutralize the core of insurgency.

This chapter describes the key variables in the Mystic Diamond model and their theoretical relationships. To grasp the dynamic of the model, it is necessary to understand

²⁵ Gordon McCormick currently serves as Chair of the Department of Defense Analysis at the Naval Postgraduate School (NPS) in Monterey, California.

²⁶ Erik P. Wendt, citing a lecture by McCormick, in Wendt, "*Strategic Counterinsurgency Model*," *Special Warfare Bulletin*, September 2005, 2.

the universal features of insurgency movements, including their evolution, motivation, passive support, inputs/outputs, actionable intelligence and conversion mechanisms. After describing key factors in the evolution of insurgency, this chapter presents the spectrum of strategies and objectives available to both the state and the counter-state. The final section of this chapter addresses the main characteristics of appropriate state responses in an insurgency environment.²⁷ The purpose of this chapter is to describe the main features of the Mystic Diamond model, which in later chapters is used to analyze the objectives, tactics, and patterns of the Iraqi insurgency and to develop of a coherent strategy to disrupt and isolate the insurgency.

The main idea of the Mystic Diamond is that in an insurgent environment, unlike in conventional war, opponents compete to control and influence the population to support their own objectives. If the behavior of the population is crucial in implementing strategy, the model identifies contributing factors which influence the population's behavior. These factors, which involve the importance of political environment, political motivation and support for insurgency or state, are described in the next section. Without identifying the source of an insurgency's power and how it transforms internal and external inputs into action, the state cannot articulate an efficient strategy in response.

For both state and counter-state actors, the structure is the main determinant only at the beginning of the process; strategy subsequently becomes more important for winning popular support. This applies again for both actors; state and counter-state.

²⁷ Due to space limitations, this thesis does not review the root causes of insurgency or the nature of modern war. It should be noted that the Mystic Diamond Model is still being evaluated by the author, so concepts presented here are subject to modification (McCormick, personal communication).

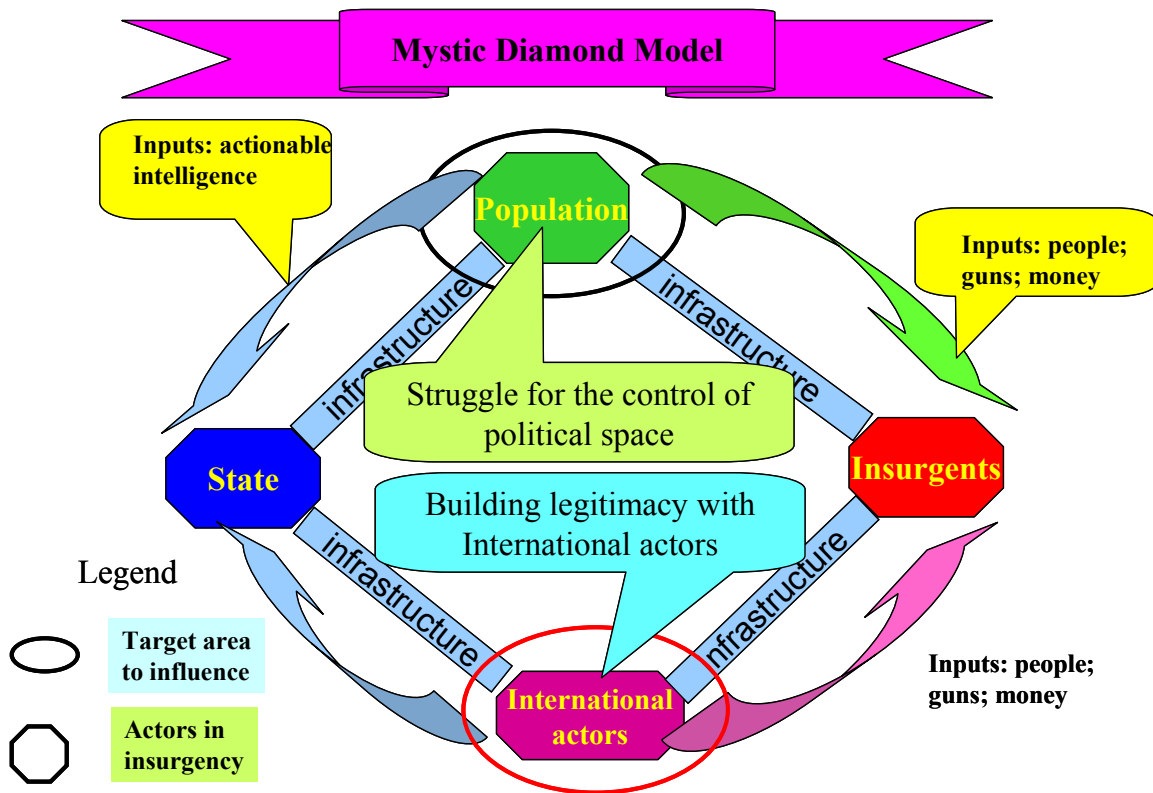


Figure 4. Mystic Diamond Model.

Source: Professor Gordon McCormick, "Seminar in Guerilla Warfare" class, 2006.

The Mystic Diamond Model discussed in greater detail below is presented in Figure 4. The model reveals the importance of a correct sequence of steps when implementing counter-insurgency strategy. If the state discounts the importance of popular support and legitimacy for international actors, and applies the most direct approach by attacking the core of the insurgency, the results are often disastrous. The correct sequence of steps to be taken by the state are described graphically in Figure 1 and in more detail in the strategic options section of this chapter.

When analyzing the schematic structure of the model, it is easy to note its simplicity and value. In an insurgency environment, this model states that there are two opponents or competitors struggling for mutual elimination. Each can have two main sources of inputs: internal inputs, from the population, and external inputs, from international actors. Oftentimes the battle to control the population is the deciding factor

in the outcome of insurgency. Nevertheless, external support can be also very important. The bottom line is that the state initially has to cut the links between the population and insurgents while at the same time cutting the links between insurgents and international supporters. The next step is for the state is to attack and disrupt the internal and external infrastructure of insurgent's organization. Only after isolating the core of insurgency, stopping its growth and fully controlling the population and political space can the state efficiently "take out" the insurgents.

According to Wendt, "this model will allow planners to optimize counterinsurgency resources by addressing all aspects of insurgent conflict simultaneously and holistically rather in a disjointed finger-in-the-dike fashion."²⁸ The model organizes a large number of factors into a coherent diagram which depicts their relationships. Those factors—features of insurgency, strategic options, and conventional versus unconventional approaches—are described in the following sections.

C. MAJOR CHARACTERISTICS OF INSURGENCY

Any insurgency has three major characteristics: structure, infrastructure and strategy. The structure is how the insurgency is organized, controlled and commanded by its leadership. Usually, the incipient structure it is similar to a network or even a "network of networks." In the beginning, decentralization to ensure the survivability of the movement is very high, with a flat type of organization, loose command and control, and highly compartmentalized cells. This incipient form is most vulnerable, so an insurgency must grow and regenerate rapidly in order to overcome the power of the state.

Insurgents, tend to develop decentralized authority structures as they mature, even where they originally form around a single charismatic individual or centralized charter group. Where the state is constructed from the top down, insurgencies are built from the bottom up. They not only emerge locally, they remain tied to an increasingly distributed local base as they grow.²⁹

²⁸ Erik P. Wendt, citing a lecture by McCormick, in Wendt, "*Strategic Counterinsurgency Model*," *Special Warfare Bulletin*, September 2005, 5.

²⁹ Gordon H. McCormick, Steven B. Horton, Lauren A. Harrison, *Things Fall Apart: The Endgame Dynamics of Internal Wars*, *Third World Quarterly*, vol. 28, no. 2, 2007, 331.

The infrastructure represents all the connections between the population and external supporters and the insurgency, links which allow the conversion of inputs into outputs. For the moment it is sufficient to note that regarding strategy, the insurgents have a clear objective: to disrupt the state's power to maintain stability and order. The objective of the state is to retain power and defeat or displace its competitors. The insurgency's objective is to expand its popular support and defeat or displace the state.³⁰

In the beginning, insurgents use violence and terror against the state and its supporters to undermine state authority. The evolution of the insurgency can be hard to predict, but it is clear that an insurgency has to attain a critical mass to move to the next phase. At that point, an insurgency can grow exponentially by winning a large spectrum of popular support, or it might maintain the status quo of instability and terror by engaging the state in a prolonged attrition war.

First, if the insurgency is able to maintain a positive rate of growth, over time it will eventually reach the point where it can either defeat or displace its opponent. Second, if the rate growth after attrition stabilizes short of what is needed to win, but is still sufficient to allow it to stay in the game, the conflict can continue indefinitely.³¹

The extinction of the insurgency occurs only if the state has adequate solutions to the problem. The evolution process is graphically displayed in the Figure 5.

³⁰ Gordon H. McCormick, Steven B. Horton, Lauren A. Harrison, 322.

³¹ Gordon H. McCormick, Frank Giordano, *Things Come Together: Symbolic Violence and Guerilla Mobilization*, (Third World Quarterly, vol. 28, no. 2, 2007), 295.

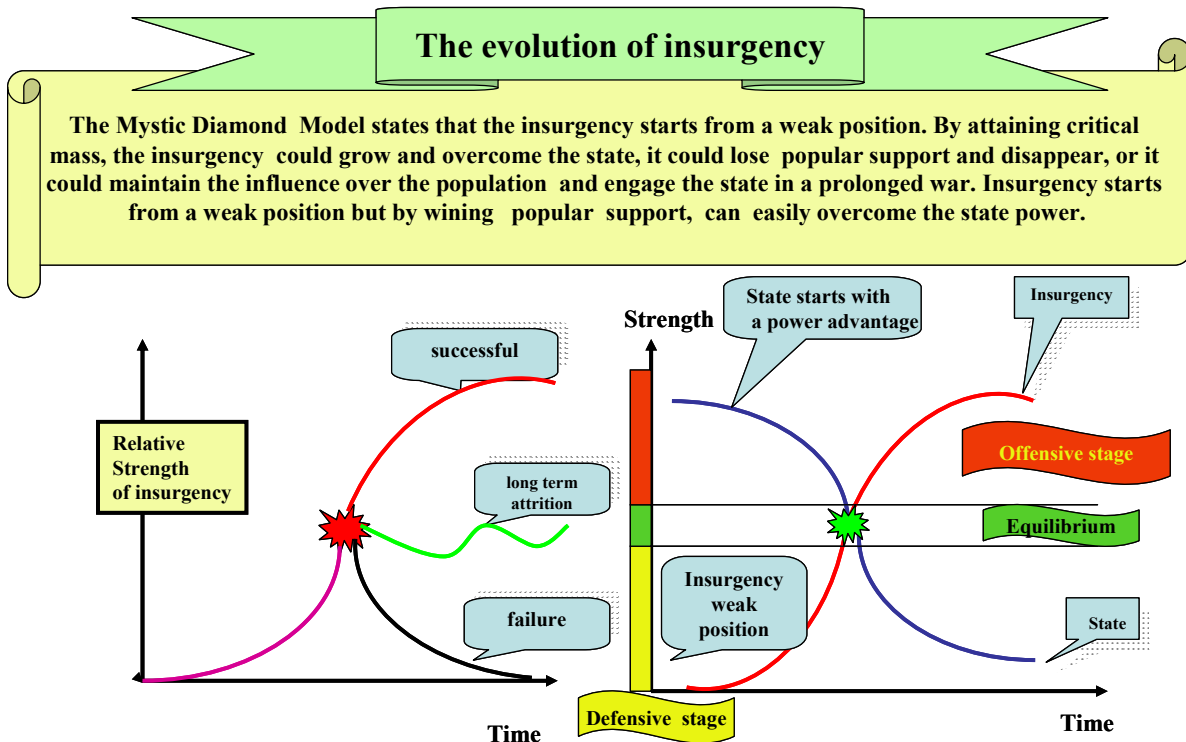


Figure 5. The Evolution of Insurgency.

Source: Professor Gordon McCormick, “Seminar in Guerilla Warfare” class, 2006.

1. The Life Cycle of Insurgencies

The famous insurgent leader Mao Tse Tung characterizes the life cycle of insurgency as having three main stages: defensive, equilibrium, and offensive. From the perspective of the insurgents, Stage 1 is the defensive stage. The insurgency is smaller than the state, with limited resources and limited manpower. The only advantage the insurgents have in this phase is the informational advantage. This advantage is conferred by the underground profile of incipient insurgency and by the fact that insurgents can better monitor the state actions which are more visible. Stage 2, the stage of equilibrium, occurs when the powers of the state and insurgency are roughly equal. There may be a period of dual power, with the country divided into different regions of influence and authority. In this situation, the insurgents can play the attrition card, which in the long term might achieve the desired effect: Stage 3, the offensive stage. With adequate growth, the insurgency becomes a larger force than the state and can finally react with a

conventional offense. The guerillas' growth rate must become faster than the force advantage of the state in order for the insurgents to get through the insulation phase³². There is a correlation between the size of the opposition and the state's ability to detect it. This means there is a time when the guerillas should grow and a time for them to sit tight so as to remain unseen. Accordingly, until the critical mass is reached, the insurgency could know a nonlinear evolution characterized by ups and downs. Once the critical mass has been reached, also the conditions for generalizing the conflict are created. The environment context can be crucial for the development of an insurgency.

2. The Environmental Spectrum

The struggle between the state and counter-state involves controlling the political space which can be conceptualized as an environmental spectrum with two extremes. In the middle is the population, which itself has different layers of affiliation with one or even both of the extremes; the population may include active and passive supporters, moderates, and sympathizers. Popular support is somewhere in the middle of the political space. The mobilisable population can be divided into three groups: core supporters of the state, core supporters of the insurgency, and a large middle group of individuals who are prepared to support one side the other depending on the circumstances of the struggle.³³ The structural environment acts as the context for the revolution or insurgency. The area of influence is graphically described in Figure 6. The strategic space is in the middle, and the migration of a segment of population towards one extreme or another can determine the outcome of the conflict. McCormick says,

The strategic space in between, gives opportunities for every side to influence the behavior of the population. That is why it becomes a matter of how you implement the strategy to influence and determine the desired outcome.³⁴

³² Insulation phase represents the portion of insurgency lifecycle where, the influence exercised by the insurgents can not change the behavior of major population.

³³ Gordon H. McCormick, Frank Giordano, 301.

³⁴ Gordon McCormick, comments in NPS graduate "*Seminar on Guerilla Warfare*," 2006.

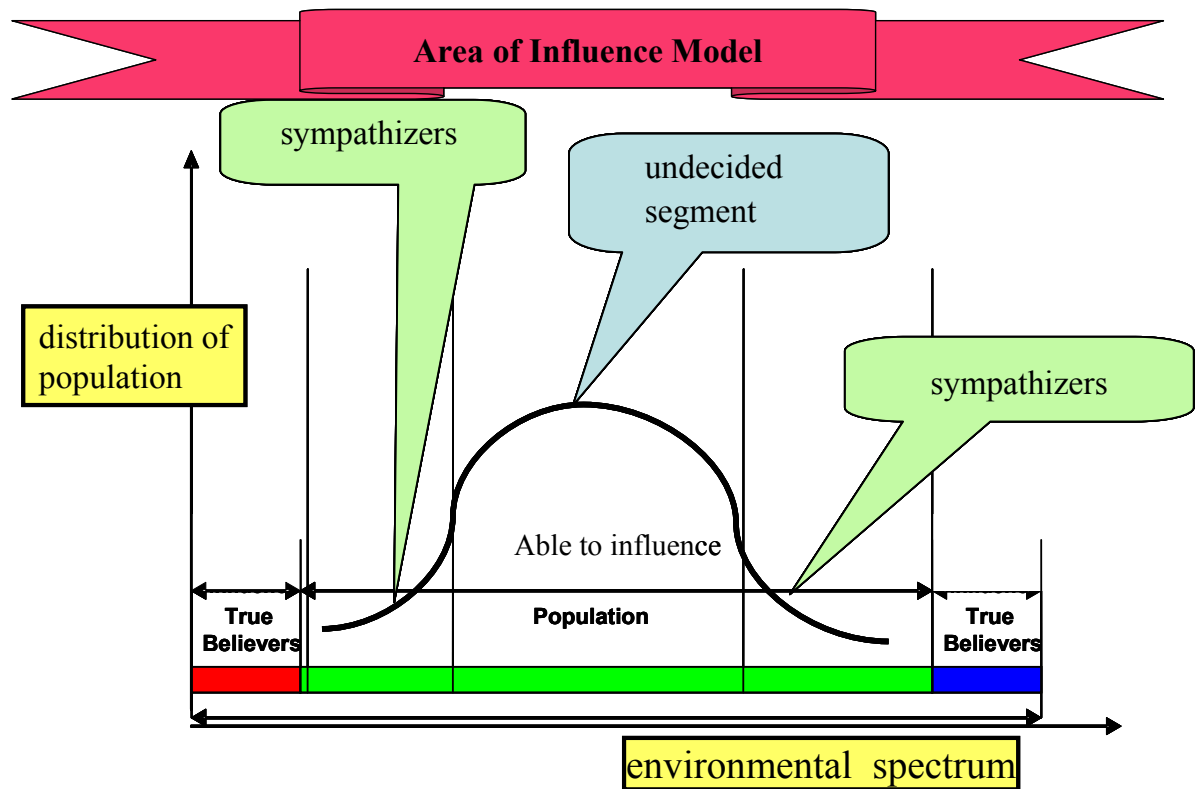


Figure 6. Area of Influence Model

Source: Professor Gordon McCormick, "Seminar in Guerilla Warfare" class, 2006.

Another important idea is that at the extreme edges, structure determines who wins or loses, but in the middle, strategy is the dominant factor. Depending on a particular situation and context, if the environment is so stable and the state structural circumstances are effective, then there is no possibility for insurgency success, because most of the population will support the state actions; (as the blue line shows in the next figure). Conversely, at the other end of the spectrum, the environment is so unstable, and the bulk of the population is sympathetic with the movement that no matter how incompetent the insurgents may be, and no matter how competent the government is, there is simply no way the insurgents can lose.

If the opposition is operating in a typical mobilization environment, there is some critical size beyond which its level of popular support will begin to grow of its own accord. Once this crossover point is reached, the group will enjoy the bandwagon effects associated with achieving a position of critical mass. The chief operational problem it faces is getting to this point in the first place.³⁵

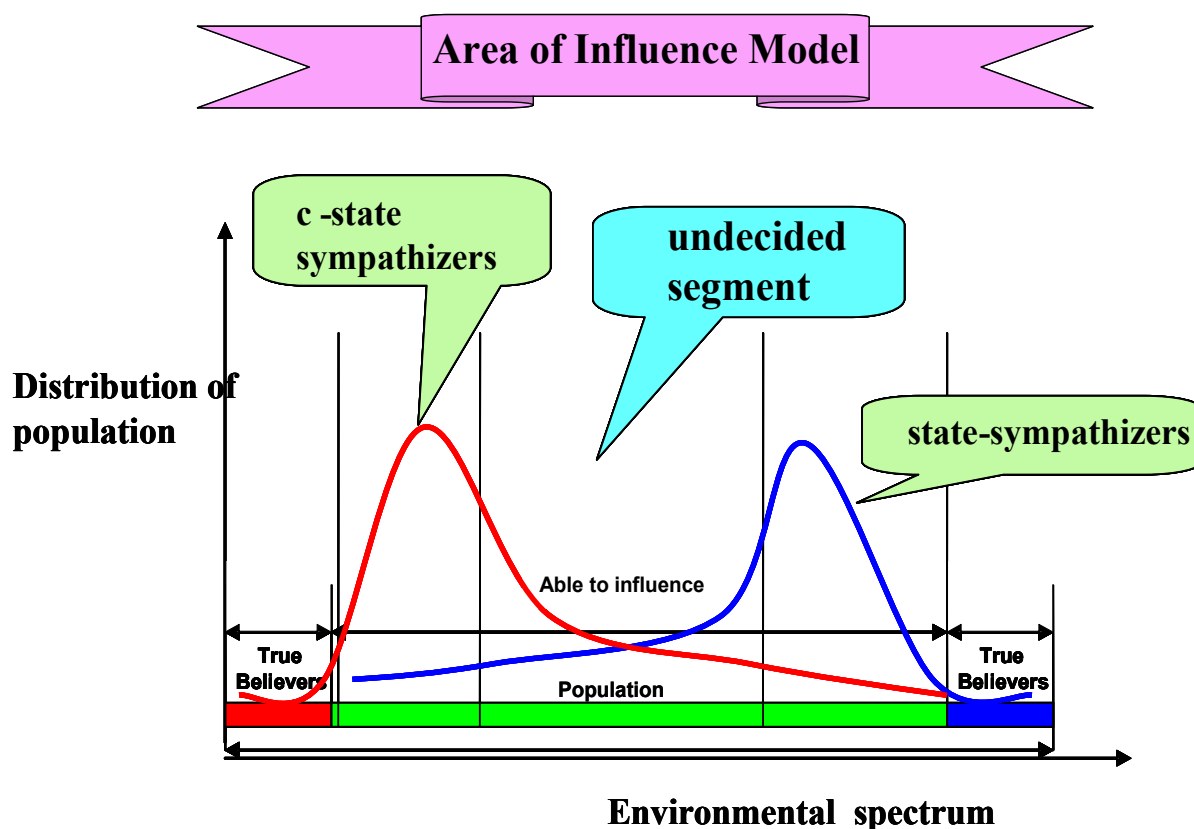


Figure 7. Area of Influence Model.

Source: Professor Gordon McCormick, "Seminar in Guerilla Warfare" class, 2006.

To summarize the environmental spectrum analysis, the Mystic Diamond model reveals that the success in unconventional conflict has two essential conditions. The necessary condition is the structure, and the sufficient condition is strategy. Whichever side is better managing the strategy and influence the population support, will eventually

³⁵ Gordon H. McCormick, Frank Giordano, 317.

win the conflict. Certainly there are some limits, in between which, the strategy plays a role, above those limits, there is little one actor can do to influence the outcome. In time, depending on the package (pure preferences, incentives, expectations), the undecided segment of the population could shift from one side to another, determining the outcome of the conflict.

By influencing popular expectation , and through this, the expected value of supporting one player against the other, popular beliefs about shifting balance of power has a significant and highly variable influence over the context in which both sides approach mobilization.³⁶

3. Motivation

According to McCormick, motivation is defined by pure preference, selective incentives and expectations that shape a person's motivation. Motivation can determine the shift of popular affiliation towards one end of the political space. In the Iraq case, one end of the political space is occupied by counter-state hard core insurgents, "true believers," and the other end is held by the state.

In every case and every way the choices people make are subjective, based on a highly personalized (and variable) utility function, socially conditioned values, imperfect information, and sometimes surprisingly inability to sort through and evaluate the information they have available to them at the time.³⁷

Insurgents use both punishments and rewards to influence the population's conditioned preferences and gain its support. The state strategy focuses on restricting potential for active support of the insurgents, but the state can do little to influence or stop passive support. Furthermore, punishment works more in favor of insurgents, who have no restrictions in applying violence.

³⁶ Gordon H. McCormick, Frank Giordano, 296.

³⁷ Gordon H. McCormick, Frank Giordano, 297.

4. Passive Support

Historical records of insurgencies in China, Cuba, Malaya and the Philippines show that successful insurgencies initially have public support that is two percent active and 98 percent passive. This means that in the beginning, only a small fraction of the population chooses violence to express their political grievances.³⁸ While passive support does not buttress insurgent activities other than with sympathy and tolerance, it gives insurgents an informational advantage over the state, and freedom of maneuver.

McCormick says, “People act according to their pure preferences, selective incentives and expectations, which are subject to manipulation by both the state and the counter-state.”³⁹ For the state at the operational level, it is most important to gain political control of the population in order to counter insurgents' efforts at coercion. Evidence suggests growing active Iraqi support for insurgents due to coalition and government failure to maintain security and provide basic needs, economic decline, sectarian cleansing and collateral casualties.

The low resolution and indirect tactics used by insurgents has a direct effect on state forces posture by creating a gradual shifting from a passive diplomatic approach to a more aggressive and retaliatory responses. In this case the popular opinion about coalition forces shifts conversely they are perceived less as “liberators” and more as “occupation forces.”

Because it is much easier to identify the movement sympathizers than its participants, the unfortunate tendency is to apply repression indiscriminately...This not only creates moral outrage, it destroys the incentive not to join the battle among the opponent's weakly committed adherents.⁴⁰

³⁸ Nathan Leites, Charles Wolf, Jr., “*Rebellion and Authority: An Analytic Essay on Insurgents Conflicts*,” (RAND Corporation, Santa Monica, CA, February, 1970).

³⁹ Gordon McCormick, comments in NPS graduate “*Seminar on Guerilla Warfare*,” 2006.

⁴⁰ Gordon H. McCormick, Frank Giordano, 308.

5. Inputs, Outputs, and the Conversion Mechanism

External support facilitates the growth of insurgency by providing tactical, procedures, logistical support and communications. The core of the problem is mainly not the multiplier role assured by external support, but the indigenous support, which fuels the regeneration process.

External and internal support, flow to a cadre or infrastructure, where they will be refined and translated into output. It is important to note that support will likely come from a mixture of external and internal sources. Defining where the majority of insurgent support is coming from allows for the proportionate and correct application of COIN [counterinsurgency] resources.⁴¹

A mechanism model is very important for an insurgency movement, because it translates of inputs to outputs. Derived from the writings of Nanthan Leites and Charles Wolf Jr, this model is vital for understanding the differences between conventional and unconventional approaches to COIN, as well as for defining where COIN operations should focus the priority of their effort.⁴² According with the model, inputs are resources (basically people, guns and money) and outputs are operations (to organize, train, equip, coordinate and operate). Outputs are the final product of any activity that allocates resources. They “can range from armed forces patrolling to the placement of improvised explosive devices (IED), to suicide bombings.”⁴³ Initially, faced with scarcity of resources and support, insurgents are forced to make choices and therefore to go for the maximum effect with minimum resources as the best return on investment. For insurgents, more important than physical destruction is the moral impact of the message they send to state supporters. It is crucial to send a clear and strong message that they fight for a just cause and will sacrifice to achieve victory. The population is a source of endogenous inputs. In the absence of an endogenous connection, the insurgency becomes

⁴¹ Erik P. Wendt, citing a lecture by McCormick, in Wendt, “*Strategic Counterinsurgency Model*,” (Fort Bragg: Special Warfare Bulletin, September 2005), 5.

⁴² Erik P. Wendt, citing Leitis and Wolf Jr., in Wendt, “*Strategic Counterinsurgency Model*,” (Fort Bragg: Special Warfare Bulletin, September 2005), 5.

⁴³ Wendt, 6.

easily visible. By not being embedded within the population, the insurgency is an easy target for conventional decisive actions. In the absence of internal support, the external ones become exposed and easily defeated. The equation is graphically represented in Figure 7, which shows that exogenous and endogenous inputs are transformed through the conversion mechanism into outputs, which in the end, leads to authoritative control over political space and population. If one element of the equation is removed, the process stops and the insurgency is likely to be destroyed.

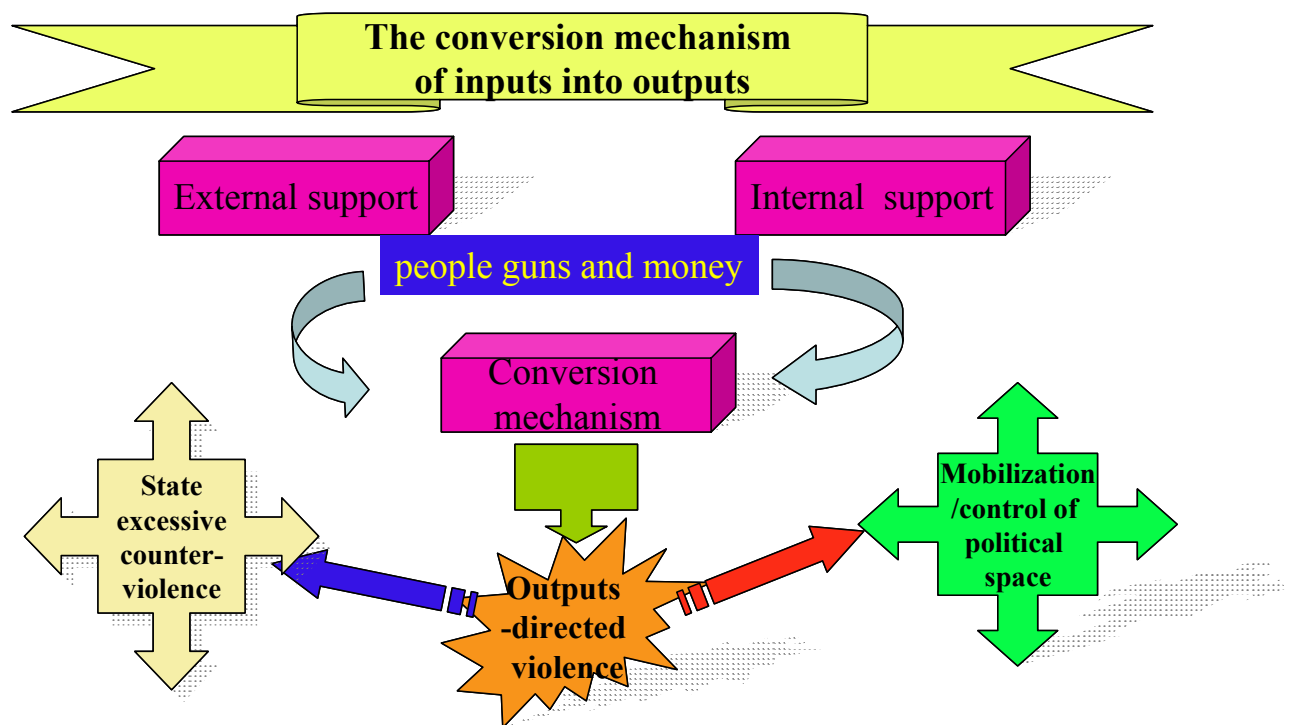


Figure 8. Conversion Mechanism.

Source: Leites, Nathan; Wolf, Jr., Charles, "Rebellion and authority: an analytic essay on insurgents conflicts," and Professor Gordon McCormick, "Seminar in Guerilla Warfare" class, 2006.

As a general rule, insurgents seek to grow. At the same time, the state and its internal and external supporters try to contain the situation and isolate the hard core of the insurgent organization. Only after isolation they can be physically eliminated. The insurgent strategy is revealed by outputs—by actions—not by words. In the case of a

healthy growing insurgency, the growth cycle is iterative, little by little. Each stage of a cycle is supposed to lay the groundwork for the next one. Step by step, the insurgent footprint increases, more resources are gained; more control is achieved and so on. The flow of inputs within the political space is represented in Figure 4.

In this light, one can understand why it is important for the state to have a feasible strategy in place. The following section details the available strategic options for the state and counter-state actors.

C. STRATEGIC OPTIONS

In a closed political environment, the state and the counter-state have limited strategic options. The insurgency has to grow constantly in order to win. The state has the difficult task of separating insurgents from the population while simultaneously cutting off external support. If the state disregards the later, then tactical successes cannot stop the regeneration of the insurgency. The strategic objectives of the state and insurgent are the same: influencing the behavior of populace and establishing political control.

1. Strategic Approach of the State against the Insurgents

According to McCormick, for the state, the struggle between the state and an insurgency involves five basic strategic “legs,” or elements: (1) Building a bond with the population (infrastructure development); (2) Infrastructure targeting and disrupting relations between the insurgents and the population; (3) Direct action targeted killing of high value targets (HVT) as the first order effect (indiscriminate methods can produce alienation); (1’) Building state legitimacy with relevant international actors including the intelligence community (developing intelligence infrastructure and actionable intelligence); (2’) Disrupting relations between insurgents and international sponsors (infrastructure targeting). The correct sequence of strategic steps is graphically represented in Figure 9.

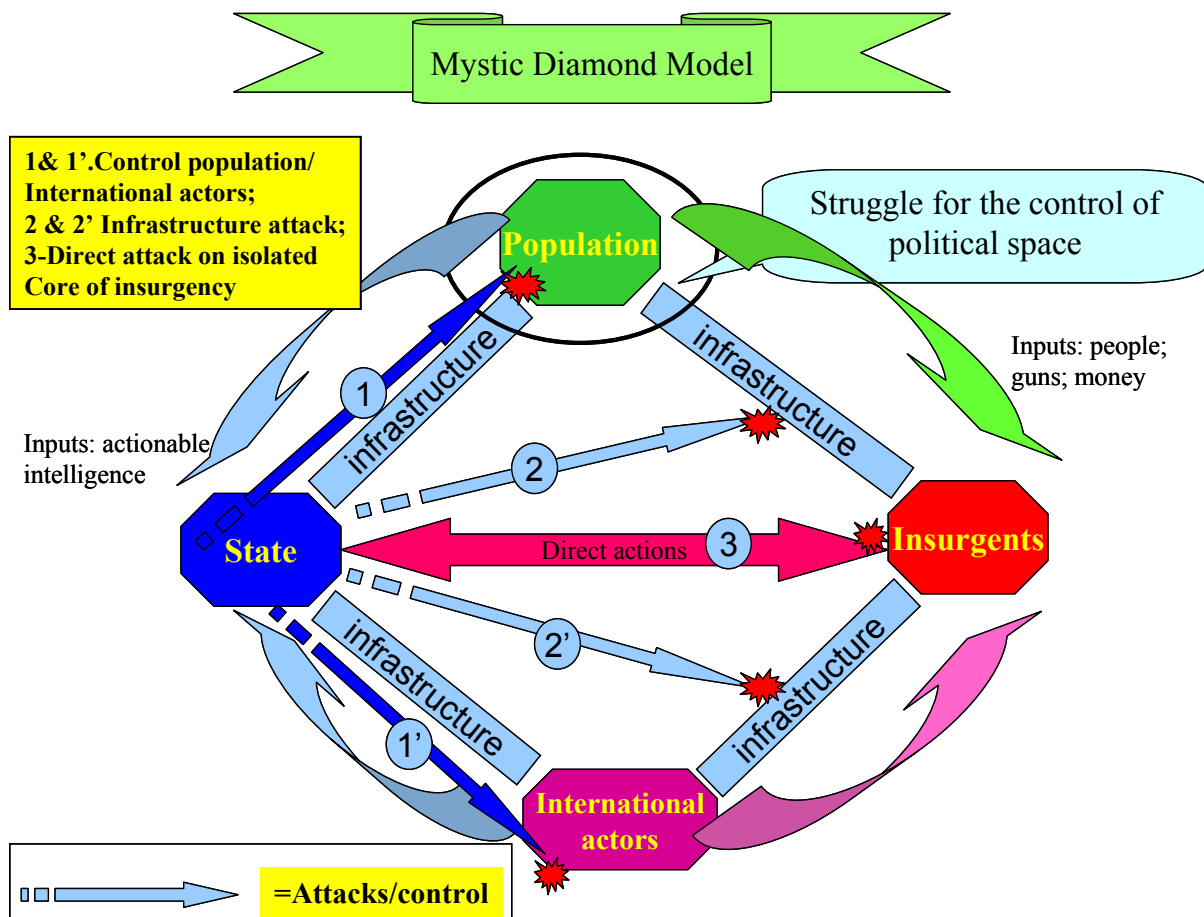


Figure 9. The Strategic Steps to be Implemented by the State in Counterinsurgency.

Source: Professor Gordon McCormick, “Seminar in Guerilla Warfare” class, 2006.

The main counterinsurgency objectives are as follows: Objective 1 is “establishing control and legitimacy over the population (leg 1), objective 2 is building legitimacy with international actors (leg 1’).”⁴⁴ The state cannot strike at the infrastructure between the insurgency and population until this connection becomes visible; the same can be said for state efforts to disrupt the infrastructure between insurgents and their external support. The insurgents cannot be seen until the state establishes effective control over the population and consequently influences the

⁴⁴ Wendt, citing McCormick, 6.

population's behavior. The state also must win the legitimacy struggle in the population and the international arena. As it establishes control, it can gradually shift towards the second objective.

Objective 2 is disrupting the insurgency infrastructure (leg 2) and its external support (leg 2'). The insurgents become visible thanks to the information, legitimacy and support from the population and international arena; this allows the state to attack the infrastructure of the insurgency and to discover their soft spots.

Objective 3 is striking directly at the insurgency core (leg 3). Without popular support, intelligence or clarity about the insurgents, the state cannot strike directly and effectively. After the insurgency is visible and the links with its supporters disrupted, the hard core can be neutralized or destroyed. This objective can be accomplished by numerous integrated operations, including raids on insurgency bases or cache points, leadership targeting to kill or capture HVT, and other visible direct actions. At this point the state must still maintain the operational status quo achieved by the first two objectives. The outcome of each strategic objective determines the success of subsequent efforts. The movement from one objective to the next is sequential, and, at the tactical level, the state can extend its actions by carefully transitioning from one objective to the next.

2. Sequence for Implementing State Objectives

The best way to deal with insurgency is indirectly, through the population. To defeat the insurgents, the state has to accomplish the three objectives. When the insurgency becomes visible enough, the state has to address the objectives, either sequentially or simultaneously, in accordance with strategic requirements.

To the conventionally minded, the conflict between the state and the counter-state seems mostly direct, a force against force confrontation. But here it is all about how the weak can win the game. If insurgents are dying or disappearing, the state is easily deceived into a false sense of victory while the insurgency lives on.

Thus, if the strategic approach is based solely or primarily on the third objective of striking directly against the insurgent core, the insurgency will never be neutralized or destroyed because the movement will generally retain the capability to regenerate. The Mystic Diamond model sequencing of events directs the state into the specific series of actions that the state needs to win. The most direct way to prosecute this kind of war is indirectly. For the state, the first goal is to overcome the lack of information. For the insurgents, the first goal is to overcome their lack of force. Insurgency is like an amorphous gas, constantly changing, never taking a solid shape. As McCormick says, “Insurgency is a force in development and the state is a force in being.” He explains that

Each element of this struggle is grounded in a geographical and political space. Insurgents are most efficient through differentiation; they don’t have to compete for resources. Then, finding information becomes more difficult because insurgents are separate elements in various sectors of the population, like a network. However, they still compete for power and control over the population unless their weaknesses are understood and can effectively be exploited by the state.⁴⁵

3. Strategic Approach of the Insurgents

The insurgency movement has objectives that mirror the state's objectives.

Objective 1 for the insurgents is developing the infrastructure through popular or external support. This allows the insurgency to gain resources, credibility and strength and leads to the next step, which is limiting state influence in the political space. In the early stages the insurgency the leaders pose questions like “How can the movement extend its infrastructure? What are the methods for maximizing the growth rate of the insurgency? What are ways to develop the infrastructure unmolested in order to achieve surprise?”⁴⁶ When insurgents have more resources, they grow exponentially and can increase attacks against the state. More attacks increase the credibility and legitimacy of their organization which in turn accelerates the influx of resources.

⁴⁵ Gordon McCormick, comments in NPS graduate “*Seminar on Guerilla Warfare*,” 2006.

⁴⁶ Gordon McCormick, comments in NPS graduate “*Seminar on Guerilla Warfare*,” 2006.

Objective 2 is attacking the state's infrastructure and external support. To extend their own infrastructure further, the insurgency has to diminish the infrastructure of the state, which it does by attacking the instruments of the state. Terror is one of the most effective tactics initially because with limited inputs, terror allows the insurgents to achieve maximum outputs.

Directed violence is used, in the first place, as an instrument of agitation or 'propaganda by the deed', designed to define the terms of the struggle and force people to take a political position. It is also used to provoke the state into excessive and misdirected use of counter-violence in the hope that this will alienate otherwise neutral elements of the population and reshape their preferences in the favor of the opposition.⁴⁷

Control is critical; without controlling the population, the insurgency cannot survive. Insurgent movements' growth will always be restricted by the state, which is why insurgency is likely to start in places with ineffective state control. One of the most important prescriptions for the growth phase of the insurgency is to resist the urge to go conventional against the military power of the state.

Objective 3 is to attack the state. The use of terrorism in combination with concentric attacks against state pillars (police, military, political leadership) and external supporters diminishes public confidence in the state's ability to insure a secure and healthy environment.

Over time the balance of power shifts. Insurgents can exploit their size advantage to gain power. In the case of an occupying force, as in Iraq, the insurgents do not need to get bigger than the state, but only big enough to influence the occupier's withdrawal process. Conventional armies lose if they do not win – insurgents drive them out by not losing.⁴⁸ Once the first obstacle is eliminated, then the next objective for insurgency is to reach the next phase the offensive phase, when it can conventional engage the state.

⁴⁷ Gordon H. McCormick, Frank Giordano, 318.

⁴⁸ Gordon McCormick citing Henry Kissinger during NPS graduate "*Seminar on Guerilla Warfare*," 2006.

4. Sequence for Implementing Insurgent Objectives

The optimal sequence for the insurgent's strategic implementation is symmetrical with the state's strategic implementation. The first strategic objective (leg 1 and leg 1') lays the groundwork for the second (leg 2 and leg 2') who determine the conditions for the third (leg 3).

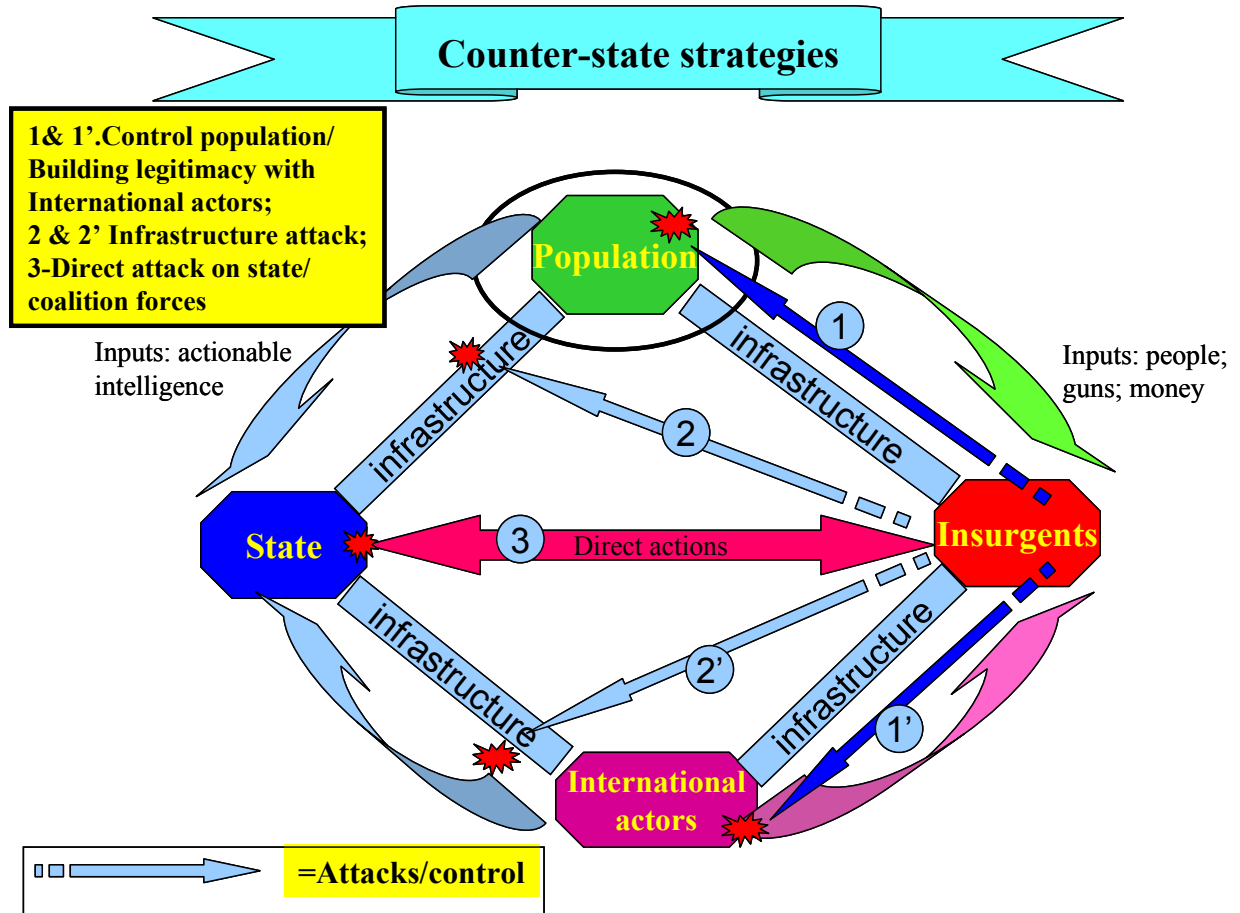


Figure 10. Strategic Implementation for the Counter-state.

Source: Professor Gordon McCormick, "Seminar in Guerilla Warfare" class, 2006.

D. CONVENTIONAL AND UNCONVENTIONAL APPROACHES IN COUNTERINSURGENCY

Conventional war is not obsolete; therefore in order to wage this type of conflict, there is still the need for a powerful, versatile, joint, conventional force. Furthermore,

even in unconventional conflict, the conventional forces can play an important supporting role for an unconventional force. Nevertheless, today, the warfare is shifting from conventional conflict to low intensity, unconventional conflict. To better respond, the state's army should also shift its thinking, resources and application of force. If the army and political leaders cannot make the necessary adjustments, the army might win all the battles and still lose the war. This paradox emerges in unconventional environments where conventional army responses multiply problems and accelerate the growth of the insurgency. This seems to imply that the future calls for two types of armies: conventional and unconventional. So far, no country can afford this. So what is the solution? For a rational analysis, one should first recognize the problem, then design the strategy, and only then select and organize the necessary force package, incentives, and coercion measures. In other words, the force has to be tailored according to the nature of the conflict. The default position for most military establishment is the conventional mindset: "We need to kill the enemy and then the problem is solved." The general perception is that once the enemy is killed, nobody will replace him to continue the struggle. The facts show that the regeneration process is more rapid than expected. Killing the enemy in counterinsurgency is a weak win. As McCormick says, "The conventional mindset states that it is necessary to destroy the enemy and after that to establish the control. The unconventional approach states that it is necessary to establish control and only after that to kill or capture the enemy."⁴⁹ For success, the state must grasp the situation in its entirety and reduce the insurgents' ability to embed in the population. Insurgents attack state symbols to erode the linkage between state and population. The state has to reduce the insurgent's freedom of maneuver. Actionable intelligence is paramount. Population and intelligence are resource bases. The state and counter-state compete for the same population and the same international actors. As McCormick has noted, the state begins with a force advantage. The counter-state begins with an informational advantage. The state builds bonds with the population to get more information. The counter-state builds bonds with the population to get more people, guns, and money.

⁴⁹ Gordon McCormick, comments in NPS graduate "*Seminar on Guerilla Warfare*," 2006.

The state begins the game with a force advantage but an information disadvantage. The insurgents, by contrast, enter the game, with an information advantage and a force disadvantage. They are generally able to see what they wish to hit, but they have limited ability to hit what they see. This asymmetry can be exploited by provoking the state into striking out at targets it cannot see, alienating the population, who become victims-by-substitution, and pushing people into the arms of the insurgents.⁵⁰

The conventional approach cannot handle the situation from the strongholds, where military forces are totally separated from locals and leave the political space in the hands of the insurgents. An effective intelligence network is the key in understanding the motives, culture, decision processes, resources, capabilities, and locations of real and potential adversaries. This situational awareness cannot be achieved by force; therefore the overwhelming power of conventional forces contributes little to the creation and maintenance of the information network.

Another key in counterinsurgency is to reverse the growth curve of the movement. Targeting it is difficult and counterproductive if not based on reliable human intelligence (HUMINT) sources. The conventional approach only accelerates the growth of insurgency. Moreover, if collateral casualties are not considered carefully, the pure preference of the population tilts towards insurgency.

In the first two stages, defense and equilibrium, the insurgency has the informational advantage over the state and the state has trouble identifying and locating targets, so it is crucial that the state win popular support to increase the flow of information about insurgent activities and to achieve the necessary resolution regarding the insurgents infrastructure. Once the intelligence is actionable, the insurgents do not stand a chance against state power. The conventional approach has little success because it targets only what is visible at the surface, disregarding the insurgents' underground links to the population. The unconventional approach emphasizes integrating surrogate forces into the populace to acquire actionable intelligence. Actionable intelligence represents a vital factor in counter insurgency operations.

⁵⁰ Gordon H. McCormick, Frank Giordano, *Things Come Together: Symbolic Violence and Guerilla Mobilization*, (Third World Quarterly, vol. 28, no. 2, 2007), 308.

As T. E. Lawrence famously described it, fighting rebels is “like eating soup with a knife.” Guerrillas do not depend on vulnerable lines of supply and communications, so counterinsurgents must target them directly, and even a few thousand armed guerrillas can create chaos in a country of tens millions. Guerrillas camouflage themselves among the population; frequently the only way to distinguish an insurgent from population; frequently the only way to distinguish an insurgent from a civilian is when he (or she) opens fire.⁵¹

Cultural awareness and the respect of local people, combined with a specific mixture of incentives and punishments, should eliminate conflicts between state/coalition forces and the population. Unconventional forces, external or internal, have a better package of knowledge, experience, and equipment to deal with locals.

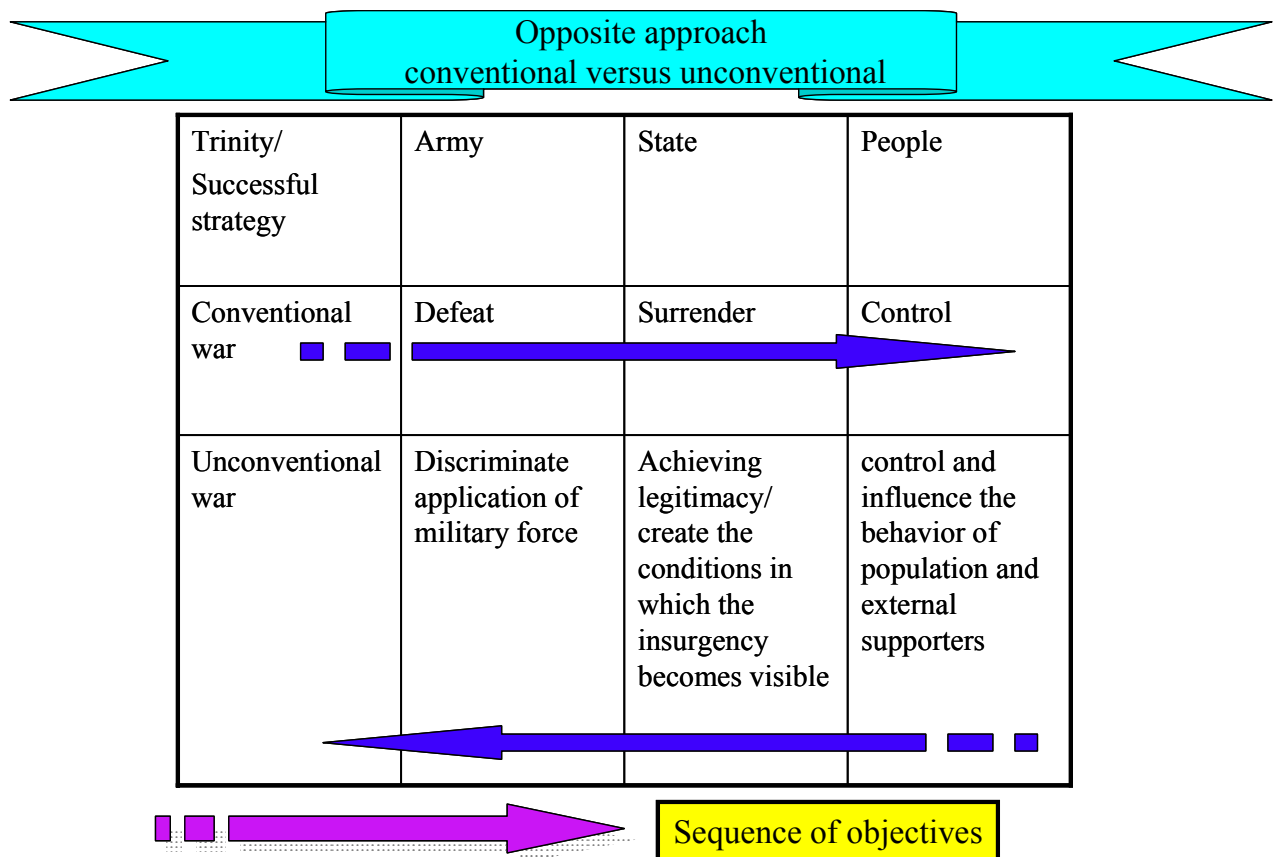


Figure 11. Winning Strategies for Conventional versus Unconventional War.

Source: Professor Gordon McCormick, “Seminar in Guerilla Warfare” class, 2006.

⁵¹ Daryl G. Press and Benjamin Valentino, “A Victory, But Little Is Gained,” *New York Times*, November 17, 2004, 3.

The figure above, displays the opposite sequence of strategic goals pursued by conventional and unconventional strategies. Thus, becomes evident that the fundamental difference between these two strategies is that what is the necessary initial condition in unconventional approach, the control over the population, is conversely the final objective in conventional approach. Another key aspect when fighting the insurgents is the level of force engaged by the state. When overreacting, the state fuels the insurgency, accelerating its regeneration and growth. This idea is expressed by the equivalent response model. According to Wendt,

The equivalent response model is vital to strategic counterinsurgency modeling because it demonstrates that insurgent warfare is the thinking man's game in the extreme. To be successful, counterinsurgency forces must take the initiative, carefully chose their actions, weigh possible actions against the band of excellence, and anticipate the adversary's reaction. An effective strategy initiates actions that fall within the band of excellence, but cause the opponent to react with actions that fall outside the band. When insurgents actions fall outside the band, the bubble of the area of influence model will shift, and we can expect corresponding decreases in people, guns, and money from the population and internal insurgent supporters, further diminishing the insurgent's ability to produce output.⁵²

E. CONCLUSION: MYSTIC DIAMOND MODEL PRINCIPLES

In conclusion, this chapter presents three main principles of the Mystic Diamond model. Examining these principles clarifies why it is necessary that the state establish a proportional symmetric reaction to combat insurgency. In other words, the model shows that an effective strategy will find and engage the appropriate response to the violence induced by insurgency.

1. The Principle of Mutual Exclusion

The political space has natural borders. Over time, one entity will dominate and control the space. Perfect equilibrium is impossible, especially when radicalization takes place. One side always has an edge over the other. Each actor begins with an advantage

⁵² Wendt, citing McCormick, 5.

that determines their priorities for strategic objectives, and each side must learn to leverage its opening advantage. The state has to create the perception that the bad guys will be captured or killed no matter how long it takes and how many resources are spent. The Principle of Mutual Exclusion states that if one side accomplishes one of its objectives; the other side does not control the political space. The regime starts out with nominal power. The real power comes in filling up the political space. The solution for the state is to take the country village by village, creating and establishing an administrative presence.

Some strategies are required by both sides to engage an apathetic population which would otherwise support the state. The regime may not get into the game until the space is contested. The solution for the state is to establish an administrative presence and take the country village by village as a strategy that attacks the insurgents' infrastructure.

2. The Principle of Feedback

In the first phase, the state's concern is information; the insurgency needs inputs - people, guns and money. The state has the resource advantage, though the feedback about their influence over the insurgency is quite limited. The insurgents have the information advantage and an obvious deficit in resources. The effectiveness of insurgents is defined by the quality and quantity of its attacks over state.

The group's visible performance, in such cases, will be used as a surrogate variable to measure its capability and prospects. The most important measure of performance is the quality and quantity of its attacks. All other things being equal, an effective and rising pattern of violence is a signal of strength. An ineffective and declining level of activity, by contrast, is a signal of weakness.⁵³

Only the population can help the state forces to acquire the necessary resolution on insurgents network, that why the feedback mechanism is determined by positive behavior of the populace towards state actions against insurgents. In the game of

⁵³ Gordon H. McCormick, Frank Giordano, 318.

influencing the populace behavior, effectiveness plays a primary role. According with McCormick, the effectiveness of the state and counter- state actions can be measured in different way:

Insurgent effectiveness measures the numbers of losses they are able to inflict on the state per time period per unit of rebel force. State effectiveness, on the other hand, measures the number of rebel losses it is able to inflict per time period per potential interaction between the opposing forces.⁵⁴

3. The Principle of Political Control

McCormick says, “Control is an exclusive phenomenon: if you have it, they don’t. When you have control over the environment, you can influence the pure preferences of the population.”⁵⁵ Control is the ability to shape behavior through selective incentives. Control must be exercised across the breadth and depth of the political spectrum. High resolution control means knowing the insurgency down to the individual level—knowing where every individual is, what he thinks, what he does. With this type of control, manipulation and secrecy are easy. Conversely, the insurgents lose the initiative and cannot strike at will. Political control is the key outcome of the Mystic Diamond model. Trying to establish the control, the state is also confronting the following paradox:

As the state is successful at reducing the strength of insurgency, it will be harder and harder for it to continue to reduce the insurgency at a constant rate. This is in stark contrast to most military operations, where success enables continued success.⁵⁶

When facing a murky situation like an insurgency, the state must clearly identify the relevant features of its opponents even before articulating its strategic objectives, concepts and allocation of resources. The Mystic Diamond model is an analytic tool

⁵⁴ Gordon H. McCormick, Steven B Horton, Lauren A Harrison, 349.

⁵⁵ Gordon McCormick, comments in NPS graduate “*Seminar on Guerilla Warfare*,” 2006.

⁵⁶ Gordon H. McCormick, Steven B. Horton, Lauren A. Harrison, *Things Fall Apart: The Endgame Dynamics of Internal Wars*, Third World Quarterly, vol. 28, no. 2, 2007, 349.

which identifies both the insurgency's main features and the dynamic of its evolution. Moreover, the model reveals the principles to be followed when implementing an effective counterinsurgency strategy. Chapter III analyzes the situation in Iraq through the lens of the Mystic Diamond model.

III. ANALYZING THE IRAQI SITUATION THROUGH THE LENS OF MYSTIC DIAMOND

A. A WINDOW OF OPPORTUNITY

After four years of struggle, the situation in Iraq is still highly volatile and unstable. The war effort so far can be summarized numerically by several figures: 400 billion dollars spent in Iraq (around eight billion dollars per month since 2003), 141,000 combat troops permanently deployed on several major bases, more than 3,400 U.S. military deaths. According with the analysis of the Iraq Study Group,

Current U.S. policy is not working, as the level of violence in Iraq is rising and the government is not advancing national reconciliation. Making no changes in policy would simply delay the day of reckoning at a high cost. Nearly 100 Americans are dying every month. The United States is spending \$2 billion a week. Our ability to respond to other international crises is constrained. This level of expense is not sustainable over an extended period, especially when progress is not being made. The longer the United States remains in Iraq without progress, the more resentment will grow among Iraqis who believe they are subjects of a repressive American occupation. As one U.S. official said to us, “Our leaving would make it worse. . . . The current approach without modification will not make it better.”⁵⁷

Sectarian violence generates 3500 civilian deaths each month from as many as 200 insurgent attacks every day. More than three million people (ten percent of the population) are refugees in neighboring Jordan, Syria and Iran. The Iraq Study Group, states “The United Nations estimates that 1.6 million are displaced within Iraq, and up to 1.8 million Iraqis have fled the country.”⁵⁸

The Mystic Diamond model reveals that in order to achieve success in Iraq, several essential conditions must be met, and most importantly they should be related to political will, opportunity, and use of an unconventional strategic approach.

⁵⁷ Baker et al., 37.

⁵⁸ Baker et al., 3.

Political will can be described as a long term commitment to an effective counterinsurgency strategy. An analysis in the *Washington Post* suggests that, “In the political test of wills over Iraq, congressional Democrats opposed to the war have public opinion on their side and President Bush has enough Republican votes to make his vetoes stick. Long term, that's not a winning formula for the White House.”⁵⁹ Without a firm long term political commitment, the debate about a proper counterinsurgency solution is useless. The concept of opportunity refers to the time period when the new strategy can be implemented for maximum effect with the minimum investment. By losing momentum, the cost and the length of time needed for implementation increase exponentially.

Pentagon and other administration staff acknowledge that a moment of opportunity was missed immediately after the toppling of Saddam's regime: that fleeing chance to restore law and order, maintain the momentum, nurture popular support and thus extinguish the inevitable seeds of insurgency sown amongst the ousted ruling elite. The coalition failed to capitalize the initial success.⁶⁰

There was a window of opportunity to implement an unconventional strategy between June 2003 and February 2006, when military analysts were confident that military reactions from former power elements would have been inconsistent in strength and duration. Since then, the insurgency has spread steadily throughout the country.

The military victory was soured by the lawlessness in the country, by the manifest inability of the United States to implement the promised postwar reconstruction, and above all by the outbreak of a seemingly unexpected insurgency on the part of disgruntled Sunni Arab population in the center of the country.⁶¹

The corruption in the administrative system, steady economic decline and deterioration of the economic structure, and the weak American involvement in the post-

⁵⁹ David Esposito, “Veto Won't End Iraq Dispute,” *Washington Post*, 24 April 2007, available from <http://www.washingtonpost.com>, accessed 24 April 2007.

⁶⁰ Nigel Aylwin Foster, “Changing the Army for Counterinsurgency Operations,” *Military Review*, November-December 2005, 2.

⁶¹ Hashim, xvi.

war investment management and reconstruction all led to increased violence. More than ever, religion started to play an essential role in Iraqi life. Ancient rivalries between Sunni and Shia emerged and radicalized the country.

It would be unfair to say that nothing has been accomplished so far. Iraq has a democratically elected government and the economy has begun to move in the right direction. However, most positive political and social achievements are overshadowed by the unprecedented level of violence. At this time, it is difficult to predict a clear outcome to the Iraqi conflict; nevertheless the Mystic Diamond model can be used to assess the patterns of the insurgency and a feasible response of the state.

B. THE IMPLEMENTATION OF UNCONVENTIONAL STRATEGY

The Mystic Diamond model states that in an unconventional war, the state should initially establish legitimate political control over the population and only then to continue targeting the insurgent infrastructure and leadership. The state cannot strike the infrastructure between the insurgency and population, until this connection becomes visible; the same can be said for state efforts to disrupt the infrastructure between insurgents and their external support. The insurgents cannot be seen until the state establishes effective control over the population and consequently influences the population's behavior. The state also must win the legitimacy struggle within the population and the international arena. As it establishes control, it can gradually shift towards the second objective and third objective (targeting the infrastructure and the core of insurgents' organization, as it is illustrated in Figure 12).⁶²

Although between 2004 and 2006, the focus at the strategic and operational level was on combat operations, in order to kill and capture insurgents and terrorists, at the tactical level there are some examples of correct implementation of counterinsurgency steps.

⁶² Gordon McCormick, comments in NPS graduate "*Seminar on Guerilla Warfare*," 2006.

In Iraq as well, Marine units being deployed there in early 2004 had similarly been planning to position themselves among the population in their area of operations-including in the notorious Sunni Triangle. In tactics reminiscent of the Combined Actions Platoons of the Vietnam War, a marine officer responsible for planning explained that the “idea is that this Platoon, similar to Vietnam, will live and work with the Police and ICDC [Iraqi Civil Defense Corps].”⁶³

However, these results vanished over time due to the discontinuity of the process, generated by continuous rotation of troops on the ground, unfulfilled Iraqi expectations, degradation of economic-social life, and rapid regeneration of the insurgency.⁶⁴

Some of these commanders have paid close attention to lessons learned over the years [about countering insurgency] and are applying them in theatre but it is not division or battalion wide. It often is up to the individual commanders. For instance the 2BCT Baghdad of the 1AD here is doing it 3 different ways dependent upon the commander of the individual unit. One is using lots of low level intelligence ideas coupled with a get on the ground approach that is playing high dividends. The other two don’t care and just go about business as usual.⁶⁵

⁶³ Bruce Hoffman, “*Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in Iraq*,” RAND Corporation, Santa Monica, June 2004, 4.

⁶⁴ Gordon McCormick, comments in NPS graduate “*Seminar on Guerilla Warfare*,” 2006.

⁶⁵ Bruce Hoffman, “*Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in Iraq*,” RAND Corporation, Santa Monica, June 2004, 9.

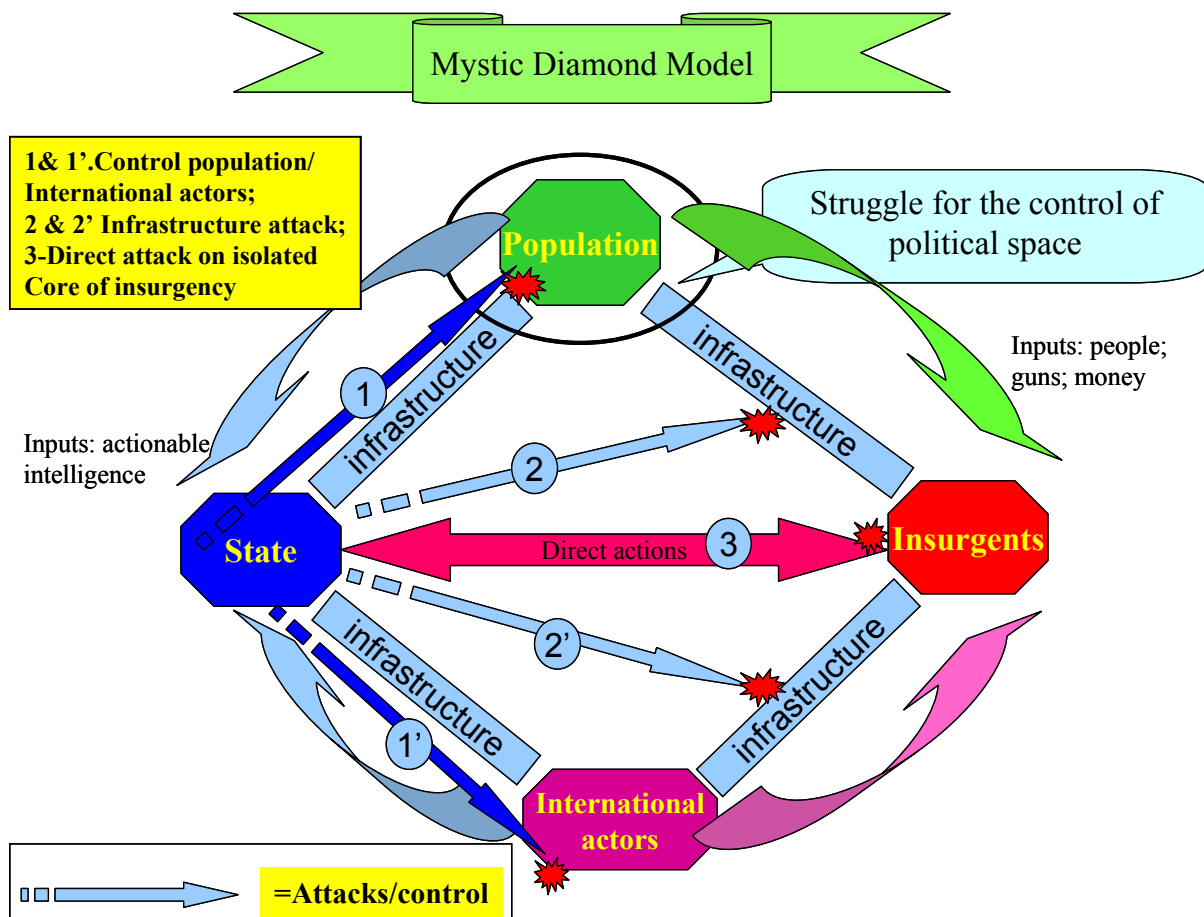


Figure 12. The Strategic Steps to be Implemented by the State in Counterinsurgency.

Source: Professor Gordon McCormick, “Seminar in Guerilla Warfare” class, 2006.

In Iraq case, the Mystic Diamond model demonstrates why the sequence of actions implemented by the state/coalition was improper, and misunderstood. The control of political space was wrongly seen by the leaders as a less important aspect of the conflict.

The most basic function of any government is to provide security to its people. That the Iraqi government is currently failing at this task in large areas of the country reduces the Iraqi population's willingness and ability to support the counterinsurgency effort, undermines the government's

legitimacy, hinders the political process, and derails reconstruction. It is the single most serious problem in Iraq today. Yet coalition forces have not stepped in to fill the security gap.⁶⁶

It becomes clear that in Iraq the primary focus of coalition forces was placed on third implementation step (direct combat actions against insurgents, having the objective to kill, neutralize, and disrupt them). If the proper sequence of implementation steps is not understood and implemented by the state/coalition, then the insurgents can not be isolated from the populace. Which are the arguments to support this hypothesis? One is that the necessary bond and control over the population has never been truly established throughout Iraq. Independent recent surveys in Iraq, indicate the unfavorable position of coalition forces in the preference of Iraqi population.

That the American presence and mission are untenable should be clear from the fact that Iraqis readily blame the coalition, directly or indirectly, for most of their current difficulties, including the rise in communal violence and crime. A September 2006 poll of Iraqi public opinion found that 79 percent of Iraqis think the United States is having a mostly negative effect on the country; 78 percent think that the U.S. military is provoking more conflict than it is preventing. A “hearts and minds” campaign cannot be won under these circumstances.⁶⁷

Along this line, polls from Zogby International show that many Iraqis consider U.S. withdrawal the optimal way to reduce the level of violence.

Especially in Sunni and Shia areas where U.S. troops mostly operate Iraqis do not trust the coalition and want U.S. troops to leave soon. The September 2006 poll found 71 percent of all Iraqis favoring withdrawal by September 2007. Among Sunnis the proportion wanting withdrawal was 91 percent; among Shia, 74 percent. Most disturbing, support among Iraqis for attacks on coalition forces registered at 61 percent in the September 2006 poll up from 47 percent in January 2006. Among Shia, support for attacks is 62 percent; among Sunnis, 92 percent.⁶⁸

⁶⁶ Kagan, 1.

⁶⁷ Conetta, 4.

⁶⁸ “Survey Finds Deep Divisions in Iraq; Sunni Arabs Overwhelmingly Reject Sunday Elections; Majority of Sunnis, Shiites Favor U.S. Withdrawal,” Zogby International, 28 January 2005, available from <http://www.zogby.com/news/ReadNews.dbm?ID=957>; accessed 1 April 2007.

Adherents pushed to violence by their code of honor, pride, nationalism and revenge are increasingly effective at disrupting ordinary life and attacking the symbols of power:

The power and appeal of “rejections” among Sunnis and Shia alike derive from the fact of the American occupation. The negative aura that surrounds the American presence also touches and tarnishes the Iraqi government, which is presently dependent on American power. And, because that government is dominated by Kurdish and Shia parties, the impression that it is “collaborationist” feeds communal tensions.⁶⁹

A related shortcoming of the U.S. strategy is the failure to “clear and hold” the areas—in other words, lack of authoritative control over the general population, the ethnic groups, and the armed factions.⁷⁰ The Pentagon declared that most of the operations from 2004 through 2007 were “mop-up operations” designed to kill or capture insurgents or terrorist leaders. Even though, the current U.S. War Strategy for Iraq, prioritize the strategic goals in the following sequence:

Clear areas of enemy control by remaining on the offensive; killing and capturing enemy fighters; denying them safe haven; hold areas freed from enemy control with an adequate Iraqi security force presence; build Iraqi Security Forces and the capacity of local institutions to deliver services; advance the rule of law; and nurture civil society.⁷¹

Secondly, the distribution of U.S. forces in Iraq, and particularly in Baghdad, is currently designed to control the vital points, not to establish a network of forces against insurgency. For example, in Baghdad, the coalition forces are concentrated in 6 major military bases (strongholds), from where they launch “sweep up operations” on daily basis, again with the clear intent to capture and kill the insurgents, and then returns to their strongholds.

⁶⁹ Carl Conetta, “Resolving Iraq: Progress Depends on a Short Timeline for U.S. Troop Withdrawal,” Project on Defense Alternatives Briefing Memo # 40, 18 January 2007), 1.

⁷⁰ Gordon McCormick, comments in NPS graduate “*Seminar on Guerilla Warfare*,” 2006.

⁷¹ Conetta, 5.



Figure 13. Major U.S. Bases in Baghdad.

Source: [www.globalsecurityorganization.com / military maps](http://www.globalsecurityorganization.com/military/maps)

Baghdad is a large city having more than 6 millions inhabitants, and by leaving uncontrolled the large interval between these bases, a twofold result occurring: (1) the bond between the state and the population is not created; (2) the space in-between is rapidly flooded with insurgents when U.S. or Iraqi troops return to their garrisons.⁷² In many circumstances, the clearing operations were effective, but the holding and building phases have not been implemented as planned. In this way, most military operations have had a temporary effect.

⁷² Gordon McCormick, comments in NPS graduate “*Seminar on Guerilla Warfare*,” 2006.

After failing to visualize the conditions of combat in Iraq, America's generals failed to adapt to the demands of counterinsurgency. Counterinsurgency theory prescribes providing continuous security to the population. However, for most of the war American forces in Iraq have been concentrated on large forward-operating bases, isolated from the Iraqi people and focused on capturing or killing insurgents.⁷³

Although, thousands of insurgents have been captured or killed, the evidence on the ground shows that the number of insurgents remains constant and the number of attacks on the coalition forces and ISF has grown. A complicated and divided political situation on the ground results mostly from sectarian cleansing, which increased the numbers of Shia and Sunni insurgents. This illustrates the opposing forces' high level of regeneration, which cannot be stopped simply by targeting leaders and some operatives.

The third argument which sustains the fact that the coalition was unable to control the population is given by the ascendant trend of the insurgency.

Having presented these arguments, it becomes futile to present any other achievements of the state regarding the steps 2, 2', and 3- (targeting insurgents, infrastructure and core- see Figure 12). These achievements alone can not break the insurgency regeneration cycle. Without achieving the isolation of insurgents from the population the source of insurgency growth is not eliminated.⁷⁴ This is also the critical observation in this chapter. The immediate effect of not implementing the correct sequence of the strategic steps (as widely described in Chapter II), allows the unrestricted regeneration of insurgency, which in the long run will influence the behavior of population and the outcome of the war.

C. INSURGENTS STRATEGIES

In contrast with the coalition forces, the insurgents implemented intuitively the right sequence of necessary steps against the state. They are controlling large populated

⁷³ Paul Yinling, "A Failure in Generalship," *Armed Forces Journal*, 27 April 2007, 9.

⁷⁴ Gordon McCormick, comments in NPS graduate "*Seminar on Guerilla Warfare*," 2006.

area (example of Sunni triangle),⁷⁵ where they organize and build their network. Based on a constant flow of inputs from population and external support, they launch coordinated attacks against state infrastructure and symbols, and against coalition forces.

Through the manipulation of the violent images, the insurgents achieve three main effects. Firstly, they use with success the violence as an instrument of armed propaganda.⁷⁶ The effectiveness of this propaganda, on internal and external audiences is profound, the Iraqi population is divided. The U.S. population and congress have moved towards a near term exit of U.S. forces from Iraq. The second effect of symbolic violence used by insurgents is the provocation effect. Violence is used by insurgents to provoke the state into engaging in excessive countermeasures in an effort to improve the relative image of the insurgency.⁷⁷ Coalition forces in Iraq, responds to the volatile situation with all available conventional means, including overwhelming firepower. The side effect of uncontrolled targeting is a large number of collateral casualties which, is fueling the “fire” of the insurgency.

By showing the inability of state and coalition forces to provide essential needs to population, the insurgents are weakening the position of state. In this case, violence is used for the purpose of generating an exaggerated impression of insurgents’ strength and regime weakness.⁷⁸

Spectacular acts of violence, such suicide bombings that have rocked Iraq since August, are meant to demoralize the population and undermine trust and confidence in the authorities’ ability to protect and defend them. Here,

⁷⁵ Federick W. Kagan, “*Defeat the Insurgents Militarily- Here’s How*,” May 29 06, The weekly Standards, 3. The Sunni triangle is geographically bounded as follows: The upper Euphrates, stretching from west of Baghdad to the northwest via Ramadi and Haditha to al-Qaim and the Syrian border; the upper Tigris, running north from Baghdad through Taji, Balad, Tikrit, Samarra, and Baiji toward Mosul and the Turkish border; and the Diyala, which extends northeast of Baghdad through Baquba and Mukhdadiya in the direction of Iran.

⁷⁶ Gordon H. McCormick, Frank Giordano, *Things Come Together: Symbolic Violence and Guerilla Mobilization*, (Third World Quarterly, vol. 28, no. 2, 2007), 308.

⁷⁷ Gordon H. McCormick, Frank Giordano, 308.

⁷⁸ Gordon H. McCormick, Frank Giordano, 309.

the fundamental asymmetry of the insurgency/counterinsurgency dynamic comes into play: The guerrillas do not have to defeat their opponents militarily; they just have to avoid losing.⁷⁹

D. THE NECESSITY OF STRATEGIC ADJUSTMENT

The complex Iraqi situation requires a comprehensive long term solution. In order to recalibrate the current strategy to the dynamics of insurgency, the state has to adjust its strategic objectives, or its concepts/ways and means/resources for achieving its stated goals. Lately, it becomes more evident that the war strategy in Iraq did not keep the pace with the dynamics of insurgency.⁸⁰ Thus, the initial objectives, concepts/ways and means became obsolete. Second, the approach to the conflict was opposite of the algorithm proposed by the Mystic Diamond model. Forces were tasked to solve an unconventional problem with their own conventional means and doctrine, instead of following the logic of identifying the problem, defining the solution, and task-organizing the proper package of forces in the revised sequence.⁸¹

In Iraq, the conventional vision is present in planning phase, implementation phase, task-organization the forces, conduct of combat operations, and even in training conception of ISF. One of the Mystic Diamond principles, states that in the unconventional approach, the state should use low profile, flatly distributed forces, as a spearhead of counterinsurgency effort, having a constant support from a flexible rapid reaction conventional force.

He began by having enough troops. Petraeus' counterinsurgency field manual calls for at least 20 combat troops for every 1,000 civilians, and in Mosul, with 20,000 Screaming Eagles, Petraeus had the manpower to establish an overwhelming presence on the streets. Just as important in Petraeus' doctrine, though, is how those troops conduct themselves. Unlike regular [conventional] warfare, counterinsurgency requires "nuanced" and "empathetic" soldiering, Petraeus writes in his field manual. "The more force used," he writes, "the less effective it is." Or as

⁷⁹ Bruce Hoffman, *"Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in Iraq,"* RAND Corporation, Santa Monica, June 2004, 15.

⁸⁰ Gordon McCormick, comments in NPS graduate *"Seminar on Guerilla Warfare,"* 2006.

⁸¹ Gordon McCormick, comments in NPS graduate *"Seminar on Guerilla Warfare,"* 2006.

Petraeus put in an interview, “You’re not going to kill your way out of an insurgency.” His soldiers in Mosul were instructed to think of themselves more as a community police force than a conquering army. Soldiers patrolled on foot when possible, rather than in armored vehicles. Back at the barracks, Petraeus had posters put up asking soldiers, “WHAT HAVE YOU DONE TO WIN IRAQI HEARTS AND MINDS TODAY?”⁸²

This is not happening in Iraq, and so far both conventional and Special Forces, do not have the necessary guidance to work unconventionally and build up the necessary bond with the population and local forces. The United States' symmetric response to insurgent attacks is intended to buy time, so the ISF can develop the combat skills necessary to fight the insurgency. In theory when ISF are ready to take over, the handover of responsibility should be in effect.

We will increase our forces in Baghdad by 21,500 personnel to give our commanders an enhanced ability to hold previously cleared neighborhoods. The ISF [Iraqi Security Forces] are also reinforcing the capital with three additional brigades. Prime Minister Maliki has established a Baghdad Security Command with 10 Security Framework Districts, with an Iraqi brigade, partnered with a U.S. battalion.⁸³

In many ways the handover towards Iraqi Security Forces, (which by the way is a newly emerged organization far less effective than the former better homogenized Iraqi army), has several flaws. ISF have been trained only in conventional fashion to deal with conventional threats. At national level only a single Special Operation Brigade is active, and closer to an unconventional profile.

To date, the U.S. has trained and equipped about 307,800 Iraqi army and police forces, up from 196,600 a year ago. But three years into the war, these Iraqi forces don't seem to be improving fast enough to curb surging violence. Daily attacks in Iraq have risen to record levels, and attrition among Iraqi forces remains high. In areas like the restive al Anbar Province, Iraqi units have, on average, only 55% of the soldiers they are supposed to, senior U.S. military officials say.⁸⁴

⁸²“Our new man in Baghdad,” (NEWS, The Week, 2 February 2007).

⁸³ “Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq,” 15.

⁸⁴ Greg Jaffe, “Problems Afflict U.S. Army Program to Advise Iraqis,” (New York: The Wall Street Journal, 18 October 2006), A1.

Moreover, the police forces, which should play the major role in counterinsurgency, are less trained and equipped and are constantly confronting the ethnical cleansing issue, which is a major obstacle when implementing any kind of constructive strategy.

Despite ISF progress, the ISF attrition rate remains very high, due to factors like lack of leadership, lack of proper communications and poor force protection. Since the first Iraqi Army combat units entered service in November 2003, more than 20,000 personnel have been killed, severely wounded, or have left the Army.⁸⁵ According to counterinsurgency doctrine the emphasis should be on having the police forces develop the expertise to create a network that can disrupt the insurgents' network.

Demonstrated by the Shia, the ISF is not yet ready to take control in the contested areas without targeting the Sunni minority. The report to Congress on stability and security in Iraq says, "The influence exerted by Shia militia members within the Ministry of Interior is troubling. Militia influence affects every component of the Ministry of Interior (MOI), particularly in Baghdad and several key cities."⁸⁶

The handover should not be done before the ISF achieves the appropriate level of combat effectiveness, and impartiality. However, as time passes, U.S. commanders have become more eager to handover the situation to ISF. As Kagan notes, "Coalition strategy has tended to focus on minimizing the role of coalition troops in handling the insurgency and pushing indigenous forces into the front of the fight, sometimes even when they were unprepared for such a role."⁸⁷

Therefore, the transition of responsibility from coalition forces to Iraqi security forces, presents a major flaw. The Iraqi Security Forces have too few operational units to deal with a vast insurgency. Moreover, the forces ready so far are not trained in

⁸⁵ "Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq," 39.

⁸⁶ "Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq," 34.

⁸⁷ Frederick Kagan, "A Plan for Victory in Iraq," (*Weekly Standard*, 22 May 2006, 2.

counterinsurgency techniques but mostly in conventional urban fighting, which does not necessarily imply the establishment of political control over population in cleared areas. In fact, they created more insurgents than they eliminated.

To sum up, it would be proper to acknowledge that conventional forces would still play an important role in counter-insurgency. Nevertheless, their primary mission would be to support a more flexible, low-profile constabulary type of force, which would have the necessary ability to tailor its response according with the level of threat.

Therefore, one can assert that in Iraq the strategic means of implementation are not tailored to the profile of the conflict. Moreover, the necessary set of unconventional skills present within coalition forces, are often the exception and not the rule.

Any readjusting process of the strategic objectives, concepts and means has not been effective. By direct targeting the core of the insurgency the state/coalition forces failed to apply the correct sequence of counterinsurgency implementation steps as described by Mystic Diamond Model. According with Mystic Diamond Model the correct implementation of a counterinsurgency strategy should spread from outside in, and not, as currently, from inside out. The process should start from already secured and stabilized areas diffusing sequentially towards to the center. But, the current strategy has been focusing on stabilizing and securing Baghdad and Sunni Triangle (the center). If the more stable and peripheral areas are progressing due to the proper implementation of UW strategy, than the example for other more troubled areas, is set, and easier to export from “outside- in.” On the contrary, when the coalition forces engage the enemy simultaneously in the most volatile areas, but fail to implement security, then the only thing exported from “inside- out,” would be the insurgency itself.

1. The Principle of Mutual Exclusion

The mutual exclusion principle developed in the Mystic Diamond model allows identification of the multidimensional profile of counter-state actors and their hidden agendas. Scrutinizing the objectives and political motivation of the various insurgency

actors in Iraq, one can visualize the dynamic struggle for political power and control over the population. The diversity of counter-state factions makes it difficult to implement a rigid strategy and calls for a tailored, flexible approach.⁸⁸

The Mystic Diamond Model explains how the insurgency is organized, controlled and commanded by its leadership. It is already stated that the incipient structure has similar characteristics with a network or even a “network of networks.” In Iraq the insurgent organization is based on decentralization in order to ensure the survivability of the movement. The Iraqi insurgency is a flat type of organization, having loose command and control, and highly compartmentalized cells. Also, recent history reveals that insurgency leadership is found mostly in elite segments of the population. Iraq is no exception to the rule that experience and leadership skills are required to organize insurgency. The former Ba'athist assured the appropriate flexible structure necessary to accommodate of the emerging anti-coalition doctrinal views. Hence, Hashim writes, “It didn’t take long for Iraq's Sunni Arabs to overcome their initial shock at the collapse of the Ba'athist regime and begin to show their displeasure, because they saw themselves as the target of the invasion.”⁸⁹

The demographics of the insurgency are broadly distributed, with highly diverse agendas, motives, political objectives, organizational structures, religious support and external support that make difficult any standardized approach. The competition for controlling the political space is often producing violence and chaos.⁹⁰

Illegally armed groups are engaged in a self-sustaining cycle of sectarian and politically motivated violence, using tactics that include indiscriminate bombing, murder, and indirect fire to intimidate people and stoke sectarian conflict. Much of the present

⁸⁸ Gordon McCormick, comments in NPS graduate “*Seminar on Guerilla Warfare*,” 2006.

⁸⁹ Hashim, 16.

⁹⁰ Gordon McCormick, comments in NPS graduate “*Seminar on Guerilla Warfare*,” 2006.

violence is focused on local issues, such as sectarian, political, and economic control of Baghdad; Kurdish, Arab, and Turkomen aspirations for Kirkuk; and the political and economic control of Shi'a regions in the south.⁹¹

The political compromise and acceptance of Moqtada al-Sadr as a “necessary evil” in the Iraqi political arena had a devastating second order effect on stability. Moqtada al-Sadr exercised the power of his network through various means, including rewards, coerciveness, terror, legitimacy claims, and informational advantage.

Moqtada al-Sadr has a large following among impoverished Shia, particularly in Baghdad. He has joined Maliki's governing coalition, but his Mahdi Army has clashed with the Badr Brigades, as well as with Iraqi, U.S., and U.K. forces. Sadr claims to be an Iraqi nationalist. Several observers remarked to us that Sadr was following the model of Hezbollah in Lebanon: building a political party that controls basic services within the government and an armed militia outside of the government.⁹²

The competition for political control later resulted in the al-Sadr wing's self-exclusion from the government decision forum. Thus, one can observe how the Mystic Diamond model of mutual exclusion extends from the simple equation of “state versus counter-state” to a multidimensional representation of “state versus competing counter-state entities.” Different motives along with the opportunistic struggle for power establish conditions for insurgency. There are plenty of motives, ranging from pure revenge to sectarian cleansing to extremist Jihad revisionism. Jihad extremism is an important constant external influence.

The participation of foreign fighters and transnational Islamist groups extends beyond Iraq and is not merely concerned with the saving of Iraq as a national entity, but with the defense of the Islam.⁹³

In this context, Al-Qaeda exploits any grievances between Sunni and Shia to maintain a volatile environment and manipulate the population to its advantage.

⁹¹ “Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq,” 16.

⁹² Baker et al., 37.

⁹³ Conetta, 18.

Al Qaeda is responsible for a small portion of the violence in Iraq, but that includes some of the more spectacular acts: suicide attacks, large truck bombs, and attacks on significant religious or political targets. Al Qaeda in Iraq is now largely Iraqi-run and composed of Sunni Arabs. Foreign fighters— numbering an estimated 1,300—play a supporting role or carry out suicide operations. Al Qaeda’s goals include instigating a wider sectarian war between Iraq’s Sunni and Shia, and driving the United States out of Iraq. Sectarian violence causes the largest number of Iraqi civilian casualties. Iraq is in the grip of a deadly cycle: Sunni insurgent attacks spark large-scale Shia reprisals, and vice versa.⁹⁴

To summarize this section of counter-state actors, the complex situation in Iraq conflict shows the necessity of a new multifaceted approach. The real battle in the long run is to shape the public's pure preference and support in favor of stability and peace.⁹⁵

2. Insurgency Conversion Mechanism

The side effect of the strategy in Iraq has unwillingly boosted the insurgency to the point when the insurgent-controlled political space is large enough to assure the smooth conversion of inputs (people, guns, money) into outputs, further expanding the movement. Diverse domestic and foreign groups rally around the general objective of defeating the coalition and the new government. Endogenous support is the most important. key variable.⁹⁶ The disbanded Iraq army, intelligence officials and Ba'ath party operatives used a prearranged guerilla logistical system (endogenous inputs) to launch a large scale offensive. Exogenous support is provided by various Muslim fighters and groups from the Middle East, Africa and Europe. The United States and Prime Minister Maliki have publicly condemned the lethal Iranian support to Shi'a militias as well as the Syrian provision of safe haven to some Iraqi insurgents, especially former Saddam-era Iraqi Ba'ath party members.⁹⁷ Again, according to the model presented in the previous chapter, if the state fails to build legitimacy with international supporters and

⁹⁴ Conetta, 21.

⁹⁵ Gordon McCormick, comments in NPS graduate “*Seminar on Guerilla Warfare*,” 2006.

⁹⁶ Gordon McCormick, comments in NPS graduate “*Seminar on Guerilla Warfare*,” 2006.

⁹⁷ “Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq,” 16.

fails to cut off external support, the insurgency can maintain the level of symbolic violence.⁹⁸ In Iraq, the inputs are both internal and external sources and have been proven difficult for the state to prevent and interdict.

Neither guns nor dedicated fighters are scarce in Iraq. The Pentagon estimates the number of hard-core enemy fighters to be roughly 10,000 (20,000 if active sympathizers and covert accomplices are included). And Iraq is awash in assault rifles, ammunition, rocket-propelled grenades and explosives—the lifeblood of insurgency. ... [T]he guerrillas enjoy support from a sizable fraction of the population in the Sunni heartland.⁹⁹

Insurgents use their networks, structure and experience to transform all available inputs into effective outputs designed to shake the population's confidence in the government's ability to provide security, order, and life's necessities. According to the Mystic Diamond model, there are two main types of outputs: direct attacks and infrastructure attacks. In Iraq, direct attacks are aimed against coalition and state elements and supporters; the same methods are used to settle sectarian and ethnic disputes. Infrastructure attacks are also common. Conetta describes the political objectives pursued by insurgency outputs as follows:

1. Terrorist attacks. Car bombs, mortar attacks, snipers, etc. These attacks have a high return early in the process of destabilization. The media coverage is intense and the public is psychologically traumatized. The nascent government's reaction is often harsh which serves to alienate the people.
2. Targeted killings (assassinations). These attacks, particularly if focused on relief or reconstruction organizations, can have an immediate and long-lasting impact on state recovery. It can break apart national coalitions and cause the withdrawal of companies and organizations that are critical to reconstruction. These attacks can also be used to dissuade participation in the government.
3. Infrastructure disruption (network attack). These attacks are the bread and butter of global guerrilla operations. It deprives the emergent government of the ability to deliver those services necessary for legitimacy and economic recovery. It also,

⁹⁸ Gordon McCormick, comments in NPS graduate "*Seminar on Guerilla Warfare*," 2006.

⁹⁹ Robb, 3.

particularly in the case of Iraq, deprives the government of funds necessary for reconstruction and ongoing security. The rate of return from these attacks is by far the highest of all attack types.¹⁰⁰

The fact the insurgency is regenerating with a higher tempo than the rate of attrition imposed by coalition forces is suggesting two things. The internal and external inputs are too abundant, and the flow couldn't be stopped so far. Secondly the conversion mechanism is highly effective producing coordinated attacks on daily basis and large scale.

E. A FINAL ASSESSMENT

To sum up, the U.S. strategy in Iraq was not sufficiently envisioned and prepared by coalition political leadership. Along the way, the strategy was not adjusted according to the ground reality. The same concepts and resources have been used to deal with changing threats. The political decisions amplified the internal tensions culminating with the proposed calendar for withdraw of troops from Iraq by March 2008. The House resolution calls on President Bush to announce by year's end a plan for a withdrawal from Iraq that would begin by October 1, 2007.¹⁰¹

Analyzing the Iraq situation through the lens of the Mystic Diamond model leads to several assessments.

First one is the incorrect sequence of steps applied by the state / coalition, which first engaged in direct action, in order to achieve a swift and definitive solution. On the contrary, the proper sequence requires the establishing of physical and political control over the population first. Only after this important step has been achieved then the necessary resolution on insurgent's infrastructure takes shape, and create the conditions to isolate and neutralize the insurgents.¹⁰² The brutal competition among factions to

¹⁰⁰ Conetta, 2.

¹⁰¹ Congressmen call for U.S. withdrawal "*Sponsors Include Republican Who Pushed for 'Freedom Fries,'*" 16 June 2005 Posted: 8:50 PM EDT (0050 GMT), available from www.cnn.com, accessed 1 February 2007.

¹⁰² Gordon McCormick, comments in NPS graduate "*Seminar on Guerilla Warfare,*" 2006.

control the same political arena makes it more difficult to achieve political consensus to stabilize Iraq. Scrutinizing the Iraqi situation with the help of concepts presented in Mystic Diamond model makes it easy to recognize the importance of controlling the population and interdicting external support. At the tactical level, whenever these two conditions were met, the pockets of insurgency were easily isolated and destroyed. The battles in Falluja, Al Anbar and Sadr city are eloquent evidence of temporary tactical victories.

The second conclusion refers to the “diffusion direction.” According with Mystic Diamond Model, the correct implementation of a counterinsurgency strategy should spread from “outside in,” and not, as currently, done from “inside out.” The process should start from already secured and stabilized areas diffusing sequentially towards to the center. Additionally, the reconstruction effort was uneven distributed accentuating the grievances between ethnic or sectarian groups. U.S. openly supported specific ethnic or sectarian groups (Kurds or Shia) in detriment of others (Sunni). This resulted in an acute radicalization of the country.

When analyzing the means and resources designed to implement the strategic goals, it is clear that the conventional approach of the state and coalition forces in dealing with insurgency has not produced the expected results. Simply by providing more conventional forces to train more conventional Iraqi forces in a conventional manner, will not resolve the situation. Perhaps the emphasis should be on having the police forces develop the expertise to create a network that can disrupt the insurgents' network. Conventional forces should be limited to a rapid response role focused on dealing with large scale insurgent attacks.

IV. RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

So far, this thesis has analyzed and explored the Iraqi insurgency characteristics using the theoretical framework of Mystic Diamond Model. Further, the attempt is to magnify on requirements necessary to adjust the actual strategic approach in Iraq. Then, it is acknowledge that for any durable economical development Iraq needs stability and security. All analysts of Iraqi conflict agree that security is a sine qua non condition for any future reconstruction effort. That why, this chapter is focusing on the military strategy in Iraq, and explore another available option to be considered by present and future politico-military decision makers.

A. WHAT DOES IT REQUIRE FOR THE U.S. TO ADOPT AN UNCONVENTIONAL APPROACH IN IRAQ?

First, if the present political trend precipitates with a complete withdrawal from Iraq, such withdrawal would provoke negative long term consequences on regional security and disrupt the geopolitical balance. Therefore, it should be evident that a complete withdrawal option would be an impulsive decision with negative consequences.

Second, if the actual conventional approach is not stabilizing the country and solving the problems, politicians should also consider an unconventional approach to the war in Iraq. Certainly, one of the key requirements in adjusting the strategy towards an unconventional approach is the political will and commitment.

It can be asserted that there are “no silver bullets” because the solution has multiple-segments: political, diplomatic, social, military, religious. Ultimately, there are two options in order to build trust in victory and effectively deal with insurgency in Iraq – either a conventional or an unconventional strategical approach. Up to now the conventional option did not bring the trust and confidence in a final, definitive victory over the destabilizing factors in Iraq.

Once we have established the trust, we will find easier to gather the intelligence we need to fight terrorism, because we will have entered the human world where terrorists live and operate. As we build trust, we will also build our influence. As we build our influence and increase our intelligence, these efforts will begin to reinforce one another.¹⁰³

Therefore, there are different ways of building trust, and each of them should be employed according with the profile and objective of a specific actor. In Iraq the main actors are not only the state/coalition forces and the insurgents but also different ethnic groups competing for political power. In this attempt, the Coalition should consider specific ways of building trust focusing on calculus used trust, deterrence based trust, knowledge based trust, and identity based trust.

According with professor Denning, there is a variety of trust defined as follows:

Calculus used trust takes place when trustier see that it is in personal interest of trusted to be trust.

Deterrence based trust takes shape where you lay especially in the fact that trusted will be punished in case he was wrong.

Knowledge based trust can be build by knowing somebody for a very long time and having a lot of experience in dealing with that person.

Identity based trust (agents of accountability) happens when you got a common sense of identity – same unit, team, and branch – sharing same expectation, goals, objectives, etc.¹⁰⁴

By applying those concepts to Iraq, the following can be further asserted.

Calculus used trust can be translated through the creation of a common interest/objective for the main political forces in Iraq in order to reach a political consensus, as a primary step towards stability.

¹⁰³ Hy S. Rothstein, *Afghanistan and the Troubled Future of Unconventional Warfare*, (Annapolis, Maryland, Naval Institute Press, 2006), 101.

¹⁰⁴ Dorothy Denning, comments in NPS graduate “*Trust and Influence*,” 2007.

Deterrence based trust – or reaffirming the commitment of coalition forces to track down and destroy all terrorist and insurgents’ network in Iraq, without establishing exit milestones.

Knowledge based trust – the forces on the ground have to display a constant and continuous level of professionalism, objectivism, and cultural awareness and to maintain the relations established with the local leaders and population (special skills to deal with insurgency in Iraq).

Identity based trust – being created between U.S. forces and ISF by sharing the same expectation, goals, and objectives, in order to secure and stabilize the country.

Unconventional Warfare (UW) represents a classically indirect, and ultimately local, approach to waging warfare. To work with indigenous forces, the SOF must win their trust. To do this, they live with them, eat with them, and share the same living conditions. They also take the opportunity to study local practices and learn social preferences. Building trust invariably takes time, but the payoff come in a better understanding of the operational environment and the ability to solicit the kind of solid intelligence that enables operations.¹⁰⁵

Acknowledging the fact that trust has several variables such as credibility, commitment, confidence, cooperation, reciprocity, and satisfaction, it becomes evident that trust influences perception and determines the future specific behavior of the population. The supporting argument is that in an unpredictable environment, trust can make the difference between the victory and defeat.

Trusting becomes the crucial strategy for dealing with an uncertainty and uncontrollable future. Trust is a simplify strategy that enables individuals to adapt to complex environment and thereby benefit from increase opportunity.¹⁰⁶

Professor Arquilla, argues that the most efficient way to disrupt a network is to undermine the trust structure. Going for physical destruction will accelerate the

¹⁰⁵ Dorothy Denning, comments in NPS graduate “*Trust and Influence*,” 2007.

¹⁰⁶ Piotr Sztompka, *Trust - Sociological Theory*, (Cambridge University Press, 1999), 25.

regeneration process, if the network does not have a hierarchical structure. Conventional wars are design to fight nations, but other methods are required when you fight a flat type of terrorist network with global reach.

How do you attack a trust structure -- which is what a network is? You're not going to do this with Tomahawk missiles or strategic bombardment. It's a whole new playing field. You're not attacking a nation, but a network.¹⁰⁷

The regeneration process directly influenced the trust in their potential for victory over coalition/government forces, and as a second order effect impacted the undecided segment of the population. This survivability of insurgents produced the shifting of undecided segments preferences towards insurgent movement.

In translating this concept to the Iraq situation we can assert that the direct influence of trust in victory, works for or against several areas such: psycho - moral; deterrence; population support; and cohesion within the coalition forces.

Because of the highly ethnical distributed segments of populations in his AO (Sunni, Shia, orthodox), Col Baker, commander of 2nd Combat Brigade in Baghdad, realized that any effective message towards these segments should be clear, concise, repeated but orientated to the profile of the specific segment. Another interesting observation was that his own troops constitute a target audience, in order to maintain the dynamic of information campaign, and to build the bridge between operatives on the ground and local. Soon he realized that in order to focus his target audience, he has to classify the target audience in three separate segments-the true believers the hard core, the undecided and the pro-coalition segments. Then, regarding local population, the focus was on undecided segment.¹⁰⁸

It is worth to mention that in order to adapt the counterinsurgency strategy of Mystic Diamond Model should followed the logic of: identifying the problem, defining the solution, and after that, task-organize the package of forces.

¹⁰⁷ Dorothy Denning, comments in NPS graduate "*Trust and Influence*," 2007.

¹⁰⁸ Colonel Ralph O. Baker "*The Decisive Weapon*".

An essential requirement for a long lasting solution in Iraq, as already described by Mystic Diamond Model, is to implement the right sequence of actions/operations: initially the state has to establish the legitimate political control over the population, and only then to continue targeting the insurgency infrastructure and leadership.

For these delicate missions coalition forces should use specialized trained and skilled forces having a dual role: creating a symmetric network to counter the insurgency influence over the population, and prepare the legacy force for the future. In this scenario it is clear that the package of surrogate forces (unconventional forces) should play the primary role being supported by a flexible and rapid package of conventional forces. This concept implies also a profound comprehension of an efficient counterinsurgency strategy, at strategic, operational and tactical levels. Therefore, the profile of the forces is not only important but also the structure of command and control which is directing the overarching doctrine.

Conventional generals are trained to maneuver large forces in major ground and air operations and therefore seek to employ their forces in ways that do what large conventional forces do best: they seek large-scale operations designed to find, fix and destroy enemy forces.

Unfortunately, guerrillas (insurgents) generally have the operational ability not to allow themselves either to be found or fixed in significant numbers unless they want to be. Grudgingly, conventional generals eventually abandon large maneuver operations in favor of patrols and raids by small units, but this operations, while more effective tactically, do not produce the desired result unless they are part of an effective counterinsurgency strategy.¹⁰⁹

Nevertheless, the military strategy in Iraq should be only one segment of the solution package. Without economic and social reforms, political and ethnical reconciliation, and external support, the term for real achievements could be postponed indefinitely.

¹⁰⁹ LTC Robert J. Ward U.S. Army (ret), *Oil Spot – Spreading Security to Counter Insurgency*, (Fort Bragg, Department of the Army, JFK Special Warfare center and School, Special Warfare, volume 20, March-April 2007), 10.

B. SPECIAL OPERATION – COUNTERINSURGENCY RESPONSE

Despite Special Operation Community awareness of the current status quo, there are no dramatic proposals for radical changes in strategies, doctrines, and training regarding waging conflict in Iraq, but everybody agrees there is a need for change. What may be needed is either a different way of waging war, a different task organization or different reallocation of forces and resources.

Therefore, it is important to design the future force structure according with the profile of unconventional warfare.

The aim of an UW capability is to work by, with, and through indigenous personnel over the long term. They would develop long-term, long standing person-to person relations. Their presence and expertise would provide a permanent, trustworthy ear to the ground to ultimately capture or kill “high value targets” through either local military or police operations or as a result of U.S. military operations.¹¹⁰

There is also a need for a conceptual transition of SOF from more traditional conventional type of mission, like direct action, special reconnaissance, and combating terrorism to unconventional doctrine.

These commando like activities are close to the conventional model of war fighting and have great appeal, and thus tend to consume a disproportionate amount of attention and training time, they are high visibility, immediate-gratification missions, well within the comfort zone and easily identified with by both conventional force and SOE. But conventional forces can often perform the same missions.¹¹¹

The argument of this section takes into consideration unconventional forces (Special Forces, Civil Affairs, and Psychological Operations) as the back bone of a new and proper organization to address the Iraqi conflict. Changes of waging modern unconventional warfare are necessary in order to achieve long term results. These changes are regarded as: commitment of proper forces, multiplication of internal defense,

¹¹⁰ Hy S. Rothstein, *Afghanistan and the Troubled Future of Unconventional Warfare*, (Annapolis, Maryland, Naval Institute Press, 2006), 104.

¹¹¹ Hy S. Rothstein, 88.

an irregular thinking revolution, decentralization of command and control, and a profound understanding of a dual – political and military leadership (matrix-network type of organization).

An ideal U.S. strategic response in an asymmetric conflict therefore demands two central elements: (1) preparation of public expectations for a long war despite U.S. technological and material advantages, and (2) the development and deployment of armed forces specifically equipped and trained for COIN operations. Without a national consensus and realistic expectations, the United States would be politically vulnerable in an asymmetric conflict. Without more special operations forces—the self-reliant and discriminate armed forces necessary to implement an ideal COIN strategy—what begins as a military operation against an isolated violent minority will tend to escalate into a war against an entire people.¹¹²

If the United States, in other words, is to win future “boxing matches” against lightweight opponents who use their own version of the rope-a-dope, it will need fighters with more initiative than discipline, and more endurance than punching power.¹¹³

Today, in Iraq U.S. forces use a conventional approach, therefore Special Forces are subordinated to a larger conventional campaign (similar to the Vietnam War approach). And this conventional approach (based on find, fix and destroy) has been proved so far ineffective and very difficult to control.

U.S. Soldiers and Marines cannot defeat an insurgency using essentially the same strategy we employed unsuccessfully in Vietnam – conducting operations to find, fix, and destroy groups of insurgents hiding among a generally passive, if not supportive, population.¹¹⁴

¹¹² Ivan Arreguín-Toft, 123.

¹¹³ Ivan Arreguín-Toft, 123.

¹¹⁴ LTC Robert J. Ward U.S. Army (ret), *Oil Spot – Spreading Security to Counter Insurgency*, (Fort Bragg, Department of the Army, JFK Special Warfare center and School, Special Warfare, volume 20, March-April 2007), 10.

Although, U.S. Special Operations Forces (SOF) are experiencing a new transformation process as it is outlined in the Quadrennial Defense Report 2006 (QDR 06), there is still a tendency of SOF community to focus on short term violent type of missions (known as direct actions).

The development of special operations forces focused on conducting direct action, foreign internal defense, counterterrorist operations and unconventional warfare.¹¹⁵

Along this line some experts in unconventional field assert that U.S. Special Forces are not used at the maximum potential, subsequently being subordinated to conventional geographical commanders who perceive the special operators as support tool for general conventional plan.

Building relations however is critical to generating the kind of intelligence needed so that hunter-killer teams can strike accurately and effectively. To build these relations in the way they are built throughout most of the world requires us to do things in a manner significantly different from the way DA teams operate and the way SOF's UW capability is currently used.¹¹⁶

The need for a conceptual transition from conventional to unconventional is evident and widely accepted by Special Operation Forces community but mostly at the theoretical level. Practically, this transition is more difficult to be achieved because requires innovation within military institutions. That is led by thinking leadership. Investment in UW technologies and the creation of the force and staff to understand correctly the process are required. Nevertheless, the reluctance within the DoD is slowing down the process or even to reverse it.

In other words, unconventional warfare requires a different mental framework as well as unique tactical skills. Recruiting, training, and ultimately employing elite warriors is not sufficient for winning wars. The realm of modern strategy has been reluctant to accept the unique of unconventional warfare and to avoid conventionalizing the

¹¹⁵ Quadrennial Defense Review Report, (Department of Defense, Washington D.C., 2006), 21.

¹¹⁶ Hy S. Rothstein, 102.

unconventional. The SOF has sufficient tactical doctrine and manuals to tradecraft. What is lacking is relevant strategic theory for exploiting the skills of the Special Forces warrior.¹¹⁷

C. SKILLS REQUIRED FOR THE FORCE IN ORDER TO IMPLEMENT THE UNCONVENTIONAL APPROACH

Today it is equally important to defeat the enemy with minimum casualties on both sides; to gain internal and external legitimacy; and to create long lasting solutions by eliminating the sources of instability in Iraq. Having these objectives the required force for implementation should have specific characteristics: flexible structure, adaptable command and control, decentralized authority and initiative down to the tactical level, and continuous logistic support.

This military force should be characterized by high mobility and versatility, cost effectiveness, an integrated intelligence network and being capable of projecting precise and discriminate strikes. Obviously, the personnel should be skillfully trained and experienced, have a decent cultural awareness about the area of operation, and strong civil affair and PHSYOPS abilities. So far, these characteristics are matching in many respects the profile of a Joint Task Special Operation Force (JTSOF).

Not only that part of the solution is the permanent presence on the ground for a prolonged tour, but also a smooth and elaborated transition between the units in order to ensure the continuity and maintenance of the relations between the community and the force. Any informational network has important nodes (insurgency leadership) defined as *“hubs,” “gatekeepers” and “pulsetakers,”* which are critical in influencing the population.

The force on the ground should be able to rapidly identify these nodes, using actionable intelligence and an instant access to an extensive integrated database network.

117 Hy S. Rothstein, 139.

The cultural awareness and mutual respect, necessary in the relation with locals, combined with a specific mix of incentives and punishments, should lead to the elimination of conflict of interests between coalition forces and population.

1. Force Structure and Command and Control

For better results in unconventional fighting, many experts agree that the system of command and control should be simple, informal, flexible and decentralized.

Orders and plans are as brief and simple as possible, relying on subordinates to effect the necessary coordination and on the human capacity for implicit communication based on a mutual understanding of requirements. By decentralizing decision-making authority, mission and control seeks to improve the ability to deal with fluid and localized situation.¹¹⁸

The force should have a flat type of organization with reduced layers of command.

The organization of a military force should reflect the conceptual organization of the plan. In other words, organization should dictate the chain of command as well as the command and support relationship within the force. Similarly, organization should ensure that a commander has authority over or access to all the resources required accomplishing the assigned mission.¹¹⁹

As described in previous chapter, the logical algorithm for organizational design of the force necessary to implement the unconventional approach should follow the steps: identifying the solution, elaborating the concept of operations, and then, task-organize the force. Further, by decentralizing the command and control, the tactical commanders are empowered with the necessary authority and initiative in order to rapidly react to and engage the insurgents.

¹¹⁸ Hy S. Rothstein, 105.

¹¹⁹ Hy S. Rothstein, 106.

Delegating authority to subordinates does not absolve higher commanders of ultimate responsibility. Consequently, they must frame their guidance in such a way that subordinates are provided sufficient understanding to act in accordance with their desires while not restricting freedom of action. Commanders must be adept at expressing their desires clearly and forcefully.¹²⁰

Only a flexible dynamic structure of force can counter the actions of a decentralized network. In this equation conventional forces still playing the support and Quick Reaction Force (QRF) role. Nevertheless, SOF should have a multiplication role of the constabulary counterinsurgent local force (political leadership, intelligence community, police forces, ISF, Iraqi Army and neighborhood militia).

We should take a flexible approach to organization, maintaining the capability to organize forces to suit the situation that might include the creation of nonstandard and temporary task forces. By organizing into self-reliant groups, we increase each commander's freedom of action and in the same time decrease the need for centralized coordination of support. We also reduce synchronization across an extended battlefield. Commanders should have the flexibility to eliminate or bypass selected echelons of command or staff as appropriate in order to improve operational results.¹²¹

D. OBJECTIVES; CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS; FORCE STRUCTURE; COMMAND AND CONTROL

Today SOF in Iraq assist to a larger conventional campaign, where different strongholds are guarded by conventional forces and from where aggressive patrol or sweep up operations are launched on a regular basis, in order to disrupt the insurgent/terrorist networks.

The new concept implies an unconventional approach resulting in a permanent distribution of SOF on the disputed areas, playing a multiplication role of counterinsurgent surrogate force, in order to establish the security and control over the population.

¹²⁰ Hy S. Rothstein, 106.

¹²¹ Hy S. Rothstein, 107.

The unconventional approach in any counterinsurgency can be translated at Strategic and Operational levels as follows: Combating insurgency can not be achieved only by holding the vital points with large mechanized regular forces. If the space is permissible for insurgents and the bridge between state forces and population is broken, the both control and security are at peril in the long run. Attacking insurgent networks should start from the source, denying insurgents contact with local population by reinforcing an active presence, working closely with local forces and employ constructive programs for the benefit of population.¹²²

In stating this view, Dr. McCormick is describing the following geospatial characteristics: for a distributed problem requires a distributed solution; state forces should operate continuously and not discreetly (partially); all politics are local; the counterinsurgency implementation by, with, and through the population it is a multilateral challenge requiring a multilateral solution.

Furthermore, Dr. McCormick suggests that SOF should be integrated in a broader concept where the area of operation is divided between tactical commanders, each retaining full autonomy and authority in their specific area. Hence the JSOTFC should delegate the authority to the tactical level, centralizing intelligence products and distributing them back to all tactical levels, providing the logistic support, quick reaction force and fire support assets. In a multilateral environment the joint campaign should integrate information and psychological operations, and civil affairs, to serve a larger goal of positively influencing the population behavior.

Allied military forces and advisory teams, organized to support police forces and fight insurgents, can bolster security until indigenous security forces are competent to perform these tasks without allied assistance. In the U.S. Armed Forces, only the Special Forces (SF) are expressly organized and trained for counterinsurgency warfare and advising indigenous forces.¹²³

¹²² Gordon McCormick, comments in NPS graduate “*Seminar on Guerilla Warfare*,” 2006.

¹²³ Kalev I. Sepp, 10.

Therefore, the strategy in Iraq should prioritize the strategic objectives in the following sequence: control and security over the population; acquiring actionable intelligence on insurgency infrastructure - create a centralized data base network should be in place allowing instant access of any independent detachment/team through secure lines and procedures; disrupting the insurgent infrastructure in order to deny the insurgent/terrorist mobility, and isolate insurgents from population; civic actions and social programs.

Indeed, first among the six counterinsurgency principles defined by British doctrine is the “Political Primacy and Political Aim” followed by:

- Coordinated government Machinery
- Intelligence and Information
- Separating the Insurgent from this Support
- Neutralizing the Insurgent
- Longer term Post-Insurgency Planning.¹²⁴

1. Implementation at Operational and Tactical Levels

Special Operational Forces Detachments (SOF Operational Detachments Alfa or Bravo) are qualifying as the most appropriate structure in the Army in order to cope with unconventional warfare. The reasons for this are worth mentioning the following: collective skills, cost effective, multiplication role, and cultural awareness and experience, and language abilities.

Identification of operators, leadership, and infrastructure across the spectrum of terrorist networks requires an integrated and adaptive blue force network. Special Operators will remain essential in this role while they continue to develop indigenous capabilities to fight terrorists and rogue regimes. By positioning and networking SOF in key locations to obtain and disseminate information, supported by specialized equipment and advanced technologies.¹²⁵

¹²⁴ Bruce Hoffman, “*Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in Iraq*,” RAND Corporation, Santa Monica, June 2004, 7.

¹²⁵ Brian D. Doug Brown, *U.S. Special Operation Command: Meeting the Challenges of the Twenty First Century*, (U.S. Army Professional Writing Collection, NDU Press, First quarter 2006), 2.

The enemy is evolving faster than the actual CONOPS because of the bureaucratic drift, or conventional thinking and answer at every requirement or request from the lowest chain of command.¹²⁶

Our adversary therefore had considerable success in shaping and influencing the perceptions of the Iraqi public in its favor. The ponderous way in which centrally managed PSYOP products were developed, vetted, and approved through bureaucratic channels meant they were simply not being produced quickly enough to do any good. Just as important, they were not being tailored precisely enough to influence our diverse audiences' opinions about breaking events.¹²⁷

Only such new created by SOF and surrogate indigenous forces in a network type organization can be flexible enough to react timely, correspondently and effectively to the insurgents outputs.

Another important issue in counterinsurgency practice for the state is to deny the freedom of maneuver of insurgents by filling out the entire spectrum of political space.

The solution is to empower the lowest levels of the military in phase 2 of the operations. Empower the captains who are the unit/squad commanders as the local decision makers and hold them responsible. This means the top leadership cannot enter the picture in that local community without the permission of the local commanders. This is a SF function, supported by the Army conventional. The elements of the conventional force should be broken down to support the SF teams. Each AO commander must maintain a continuous contact with the commanders contiguous to them, in order to avoid (deny) the enemy the ability (opportunity) to infiltrate between the spaces. There must be no space but continuity between each area of operation. Let the commander of the area of operation be the king of the area of operation.¹²⁸

The only centralized area regarding the command and control should cover the intelligence, logistic and fire support aspects. A robust QRF with air capabilities should be positioned and cover a central area in order to respond timely to different critical situation.

¹²⁶ Gordon McCormick, comments in NPS graduate “*Seminar on Guerilla Warfare*,” 2006.

¹²⁷ Gordon McCormick, comments in NPS graduate “*Seminar on Guerilla Warfare*,” 2006.

¹²⁸ Gordon McCormick, comments in NPS graduate “*Seminar on Guerilla Warfare*,” 2006.

Emergency conditions dictate that government needs a single, fully empowered executive to direct and coordinate counterinsurgency efforts. Power-sharing among political bodies, while appropriate and necessary in peace times, presents wartime vulnerabilities and gaps in coordination that insurgents can exploit.¹²⁹

Further, Professor McCormick explains the relations between the force and its commander, relations which should not undermine the achievement of the strategic objective.

When the problem arises, the associated QRF must fall in under the AO commander control, to solve the issue. The JTF commander should be roaming the area of operations AOs to ensure that the empowered captains are getting what they need, when they need. The JTF commander should be the single person in charge in AO, responsible for all, and everyone should answer to him. Because the unity of command is crucial, he should have total and ultimate control. All others are there to support him.¹³⁰

Among the measures designed to control the space in Area of operations, one can include restrictive and identification procedures, such as the mandatory magnetic identification card for all inhabitants. Additionally to magnetic code, photo, fingerprint, and other security measures should be added to these cards for two reasons: first to deny the illegal reproduction and second to allow tactical commanders to check the card through a portable tactical device tied to the database.

Important individual data should comprise, at a minimum, name, photograph, biographical data, distinguishing characteristics, educations, current and former employment, address and phone numbers, record of foreign travel and military service, family member's tribal affiliation, ethnic and religious affiliation.¹³¹

¹²⁹ Kalev I. Sepp, "Best Practices in Counterinsurgency," (Military Review, May – June 2005), 11.

¹³⁰ Gordon McCormick, comments in NPS graduate "*Seminar on Guerilla Warfare*," 2006.

¹³¹ LTC Robert J. Ward U.S. Army (ret), *Oil Spot – Spreading Security to Counter Insurgency*, (Fort Bragg, Department of the Army, JFK Special Warfare center and School, Special Warfare, volume 20, March-April 2007), 13.

Enabling ground commanders to access data about any suspect leads gradually to a restriction of movement of insurgents and supporters. This measure, integrated in a complex control package, along with curfews, random road-blocks and check-points, vehicle restricted areas, and HUMINT operations, should also help holding the cleared area.

Constant patrolling by government forces establishes an official presence that enhances security and builds confidence in the government. Patrolling is a basic tenet of policing, and in the last 100 years all successful counterinsurgencies have employed this fundamental security policy.¹³²

Once the curfew has been imposed, specially trained units should begin exhaustive systematic search and clear operations, block by block, building by building. The host nation element of the clearing and consolidation force should conduct an aggressive information operation campaign to tell the populace how the operations is design to improve their security and quality of life; to request their tolerance of this temporary, yet necessary, inconvenience; and to solicit their active support.¹³³

One common mistake at tactical and operational level is intelligence gathering. Although in conventional operation the advanced intelligence party provides essential data about the enemy, in counterinsurgency operations the collection of data becomes effective only after the state/coalition are establishing the full control on respective area. That why, the following approach is ineffective:

Clearing operations should be preceded by an intense intelligence gathering campaign in the target city or area. The campaign will identify insurgents, insurgents' sympathizers and government supporters. Intelligence gatherers will compile black and white lists to identify known insurgents and insurgents' sympathizers.¹³⁴

Only after creating the critical bounds with the population and local forces, this flexible and highly mobile structure should exploit the resulted actionable intelligence and disseminate critical intelligence products through integrated system.

¹³² Kalev I. Sepp, 11.

¹³³ LTC Robert J. Ward, 15.

¹³⁴ LTC Robert J. Ward, 14.

Putting intelligence dominance into practice to gain control of territory plagued by armed groups means the integration of the collection, analysis, covert action, and counterintelligence instruments – to maximize effectiveness against targets.¹³⁵

E. CONCLUSIONS

The findings of this thesis enable the reader to understand the possible outcomes between the conventional approach and unconventional approach to asymmetrical/irregular conflicts. Furthermore, by identifying the feasible profile of a military structure designed to counter the insurgency the state can also design the strategic steps to control and secure the population.

At an organizational level, optimal force structure will ensure for deployed forces to have the requisite capabilities for operating in the unique (unconventional) counterinsurgency or counterterrorist environment. Without these capabilities and skills, the doctrinal, training, and technological improvements are wasted.

History shows us that the transition from conventional thinking to unconventional can not be done over night. Modern armies having in their doctrine incorporated the preemptive and preventive strategy will be forced eventually to develop another type of military force in order to deal with low intensity conflict environment, a constant source of instability in today's World.

McCormick's Mystic Diamond is a feasible model, which correctly applied, can bring stability to a troubled area. In order to be implemented the model has to be acknowledged and understood by operators and leaders.

In Iraq, a pure conventional approach has no long lasting results, because is not able to deal properly with eliminating the sources of violence and instability. Therefore, instead of asking the conventional military forces to adapt and deal with threats for which

¹³⁵ Richard Schultz Jr. and Godson Roy, *Intelligence Dominance*, (Washington, DC, CSI's Armed Groups Project, Weekly Standard, 31 July 2006), 22.

they were not created and prepared to address, the politico-military leadership should consider using SOF, as the combatant structure specially designed and trained to manage irregular conflicts, respective the Iraqi one.

Furthermore, the politico-military leadership should envision the creation of a constabulary type of force/structure consisting in SOF, CA, PSYOPS, ISF, Iraqi police forces, political authorities, local protection or security forces, and doctrinally adapted to deal with and eliminate the asymmetric threat. In advance this surrogate structure should be able to fight in unconventional environment and to fulfill the task of stabilizing a country or a region for a long lasting term.

Resurrecting a UW capability will require a real change in thinking, at the national policy level, within Department of Defense and in the SOF community. At the highest levels, it will require a change in strategic thinking and policymaking to accept UW as an important arena that is not peripheral to national interest, but is one that can add significantly to our security.¹³⁶

Facing the perspective of a withdrawal of U.S. Forces from Iraq it might be an error to display confidence in any type of strategy, conventional or unconventional. Nevertheless, the Mystic Diamond Model provides a feasible modus operandi for SOF community and clears the conceptual fog of insurgency chaos. The unity of effort should be persuaded with determinacy on all aspects of strategy objectives (ends), concepts (ways) and resources (means). The Mystic Diamond Model acknowledges the importance of creating the national consensus and reconciliation as the bases for a long term solution. Besides political consensus, economic reconstruction of the country, and the necessary improvement of Iraqi people condition of leaving create an environment which becomes difficult to be further penetrated by the destabilizing forces as a synergic condition.

Similar with the Vietnam War, it can be asserted that irrespective of potential outcome of the Iraqi conflict, at least on the military field, it should be a new revolutionary wave. This revolutionary wave should encompass valuable lessons learned not only at tactical and operational levels but also at the strategic one. A careful analysis

¹³⁶ Hy S. Rothstein, 178.

of those lessons learned could bring to the surface at least the value of theoretical framework of Mystic Diamond Model, as the unconventional strategic option developed through historical considerations of all successful counterinsurgencies practices, methods and techniques.

It is still possible for Iraq and coalition governments to adopt a proven counterinsurgencies practices and abandon schemes that have no record of success. Any campaign plan to prosecute the counterinsurgency in Iraq should be submitted to a test of historical feasibility in addition to customary methods of analysis.¹³⁷

¹³⁷ Kalev I. Sepp, "Best Practices in Counterinsurgency," (Military Review, May-June, 2005), 12.

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